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EDITORIAL

JOURNALISTS AS SPIES

Myopic in vision and scattershot in language, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruling affirming Samuel Loring Morison's conviction for espionage hands the government a hunting license for journalists and whistleblowers. While employed as a U.S. Navy intelligence analyst, Morison passed three classified U.S. satellite photographs of a Soviet nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to the British periodical *Jane's Defence Weekly*, in order, he said, to alert America to the Soviet military threat. But he was also acting as a journalist, leaking the pictures to the publication for which, with the permission of the Navy, he worked as a freelance contributor.

Neither of those justifications helped him avoid the toils of the World War I–vintage espionage statute. The trial judge ruled that evidence of his motives was irrelevant, and the appeals court affirmed that he should be tried as a common spy (not to mention a thief of government property). "The mere fact that one has stolen a document in order that he may deliver it to the press . . . will not immunize him from responsibility for his criminal act," wrote appeals court Judge Donald Stuart Russell in his controlling opinion. Otherwise, the First Amendment would be "a warrant for thievery."

Deciding a case that raises grave civil liberties issues as though it were a third-rate burglary, Judge Russell let stand the first conviction of a journalist for espionage in the nation's history and opened the door to further prosecutions of the press. The threat of such actions fosters media self-censorship and grand-jury grilling of reporters about their sources. The espionage statute thus becomes an unofficial Official Secrets Act, with the government having the last word on what it may conceal from the public. Congress should repeal this ill-drafted and antiquated law before it does more mischief.

REAGAN v. WALSH
Jefferson Morley

JACKSON AND JEWS
Norman Birnbaum

ISRAELI RIGHT
Robert I. Friedman

'TIMES' WARP
Seymour Krim

GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ
Jean Franco

BLACK WRITERS
John A. Williams

DEMOGRAPHY & DEMOCRACY

ISRAEL—THE FORTY YEARS' CRISIS

BERNARD AVISHAI

"This is not a strike but a lockout; the Arab merchants of East Jerusalem are locking out the Jews." I was driving in late winter with Avi, my old neighbor from the French Hill, to the kitchen of his catering business in Atarot—an industrial park for Israeli businesses, planted on the hills northwest of Jerusalem—leapfrogging the Arab suburb of Shu'fat, on the road to Ramallah. Once a leftist-Zionist leader in Mexico—"Zapata," his wife calls him—Avi has been supporting peace groups since 1972. Now, he says, one lives from "day to night": He makes this trip morning and evening.

We used to linger for pita and pottery on this road; this time we drove through, windows up, without stopping. "Nobody is going hungry here," Avi said, not in solidarity but with resigned admiration, pointing to the Arab duplexes. "The teen-age boys who work for me say that trucks pass from house to house in the middle of the night, distributing food and cash so that the demonstrations can go on during the day. It's no secret who's organizing the thing. They're in touch by telephone." He meant the Palestine Liberation Organization, which most Israelis assumed to be instructing the underground organization of the Palestinian uprising—an exaggerated assumption, as matters unfold. (The army subsequently put an end to international telephone calls.)

We drove deeper into Shu'fat, which looked deceptively serene—as on the Sabbath. Only this was Thursday afternoon. The main road to Ramallah was full of traffic; on either side we saw block after block of closed shops, cream-

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LETTERS.

IN LAND WE TRUST

Washington

Jane Holtz Kay ["Architecture," Feb. 20] calls much-needed national attention to the crisis of development facing historic Waterford, Virginia. But in doing so she takes several undeserved shots at the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the national historic preservation program.

The National Trust foresaw the problems now facing Waterford in 1981, when we published "The Development of Rural Conservation Programs: A Case Study of Loudoun County, Va." and warned that the Waterford easement program

> takes a risk that unprotected properties, including undeveloped lands surrounding the village, might become more desirable because the qualities of the neighboring properties are now assured. This could attract new development incompatible with the village. . . . To mitigate the consequences of a highly desirable, unprotected property's going up for sale, the foundation could . . . establish a revolving fund to pay the market rate for such properties and then place an easement on them and sell them.

The National Trust has helped the Waterford Foundation often—with more than $150,000 in grants and loan awards since 1973—but the crucial ingredient for Waterford's preservation, indeed for all successful American preservation projects, is effective local leadership.

Despite Kay's assertion that the trust is "still mired in a narrow reverence for the single building," since 1982 the trust's Critical Issues Fund has disbursed $875,000 to forty-six projects on the cutting edge of historic preservation. Not one funded project limits its focus to single buildings. On the contrary, grants to governments and nonprofit groups in San Francisco; Philadelphia; Roanoke, Virginia; Denver; Atlanta; Chicago; the District of Columbia and others all seek to make historic preservation a central part of planning for the future in American communities.

Last year, supported by a Congressional appropriation, the Critical Issues Fund committed matching grants totaling $426,150 to twenty-six projects involving issues of economic development, growth management, affordable housing and endangered historic resources. Similarly, our Inner-City Ventures Fund provides grants, low-interest loans and technical assistance to nonprofit neighborhood organizations for housing and commercial rehabilitation projects in low- and moderate-income—especially minority—neighborhoods. Funding since 1981 totals $2.9 million for forty-five projects.

Historic Waterford, both the village and the foundation, faces numerous challenges in the year ahead. Passage by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors of the Waterford Area Management Plan is a large step in the right direction. But they don't have to go it alone. Preservation groups are working in Richmond to gain passage of enabling legislation that will allow local governments in Virginia to protect their historic resources effectively. The National Trust supports these efforts wholeheartedly.

Carl L. Nelson
Office of Public Affairs
National Trust for Historic Preservation

LANDMARK BATTLE

Berkeley, Calif.

To Jane Holtz Kay it may be "clear beyond any doubt that Waterford, the place, should be an untouchable landmark," but it is not clear to me. Kay does the development of a left pro-preservationist perspective a disservice by not addressing directly why, in a given case, preservationist battles are anything more than struggles among competing elites to dominate space. Nearly every such struggle represents the "property contradiction," in which one elite's living environment is another elite's opportunity for accumulation. What's new in Waterford? To this reader, Kay's assignment of white and black hats seems too quick and unexamined.

Roger Montgomery

KAY REPLIES

Boston

True, the grass roots is where preservation begins and ends. Nonetheless, it is up to the National Trust for Historic Preservation as a nationally funded body to expend more energy when an enclave of excellence is about to be undermined and a protective process of broad import has proven itself so ineffectual. The trust's minimal response, defended in Carl L. Nelson's letter, did not do so in Waterford.

Ironically, in the weeks since the original article on the threat to Waterford's rural landscape appeared in *The Nation*, an equally alarming battle on the urban front has again manifested the trust's politically expedient behavior. In a page out of the 1950s bulldozer era, the Federal government is literally paying the way for the city of Scranton, Pennsylvania, to flatten much of its National Register district. About one-third of the city's nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century main street, Lackawanna Avenue, will give way to the prototypal suburban mall—aided by a $15 million Urban Development Action Grant. This outrage, which also undermines the National Park Service's adjacent rail museum, has prompted protests from the city's Architectural Heritage Association and a letter from pioneer critic Jane Jacobs deploring this "gratuitous destruction" of a "national treasure."

The link of this destructive Federal funding to the district's Representative, Joseph McDade, ranking Republican on the House Appropriations Committee, should be obvious. The reason for the failure of the trust to defend the urban preservation work of the last generation from still another major attack should be equally obvious. In both Waterford and Scranton, it is clear that the nation's would-be preservers are so fearful of their Congressional funding that they have become foxes guarding the national chicken coop.

With such in-house troubles, it is even sadder to hear a professor of planning, Roger Montgomery, speak out against the overall fight to protect the built and natural environment, and, to be frank, I am rather at a loss to understand his narrow argument.

The issue is not simply who will dominate space but whether we can save this planet. It is not a matter of fighting elites (rich folk versus rich folk) but a struggle between those who care for the public landscape and those who would despoil it; between those who would maintain the aesthetic and ecological integrity of the countryside and those who would plunder it. That is why Waterford, this small jewel in a small county, matters. Yes, we need to reallocate such resources and create a more equitable environment. But, in the meantime, should we sit idly by while profiteers savage these resources?

To argue that the partisans for saving this last landscape are only the elite is itself elitist. In Bali, as the saying goes, no one is an artist. Which means, of course, that everyone is. In the battle to guard our heritage for future generations, everyone should be a preservationist. I therefore invite Roger Montgomery—as well as an invigorated National Trust—to share in the work and dream of a nation where "no one is an environmentalist."

Jane Holtz Kay

JACKSON ON ABORTION

Washington

The Nation's endorsement of Jesse Jackson is appreciated [editorial, "For Jesse Jackson and His Campaign," April 16], but the editorial is ambiguous on one significant point, which I would like to clarify: Jackson fully supports *Roe v. Wade*, the right of a woman to choose and, most important, Federal funding of abortion—because all people deserve equal protection under the law. We are pleased that both leading Democratic candidates, Jackson and Gov. Michael Dukakis, are fully pro-choice, supporting both choice and funding.

Kristina Kiehl
Chair, Voters for Choice

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EDITORIALS.

Afghan Prologue

On May 15, thirty-three years after the Soviet Union ended its joint great-power occupation of Austria, its troops will begin to leave Afghanistan. The agreement reached after six years of arduous negotiation is historic: For the first time since its withdrawal from Austria, Moscow will voluntarily pull its forces out of a country. But the pact, signed last week by the United States and the Soviet Union as guarantors, is only a prologue to peace in the country and the region.

General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's boldness in cutting his losses in Afghanistan may strengthen his reputation as a statesman, but he is also involved in a political struggle at home. The first all-union Communist Party conference since 1941, this June, will determine the pace and fate of *perestroika*. Charges of "losing Afghanistan" or bowing to U.S. pressure by agreeing to last-minute demands that America continue to supply the Afghan mujahedeen may make Gorbachev more vulnerable at home. His statement of April 9 that the agreement "should not be regarded as a sort of present to President Reagan on the eve of his visit to the U.S.S.R." was an opening shot at his opposition.

That Gorbachev has learned a potentially constructive lesson from Afghanistan was demonstrated by his tacit acknowledgments that Soviet intervention was a blunder and the war a "bleeding wound." In Washington, however, the Reagan Administration escalates its rhetoric in support of the most extreme mujahedeen factions, one of which shot

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down a passenger plane over Kabul recently, killing twenty-nine persons. The sensible thing to do now is tone down the rhetoric and work with the Afghan moderates who could form a coalition government. The Administration also promotes the false argument that the Soviet withdrawal confirms the validity of the Reagan doctrine. The conventional wisdom, as dispensed by David Gergen on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* on April 8, is that U.S. support for the mujahedeen defeated the Soviet Army. In fact, some Sovietologists and military experts argue that the Russians, who could have chosen to stay in Afghanistan until hell freezes over, were not defeated but simply decided to return badly needed resources to the domestic sector.

The Geneva agreements provide a framework for Soviet-American collaboration in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and the resettlement of millions of refugees. But without political will on both sides there is no guarantee that the accord will end the conflict. The provision to allow both sides to continue arming their proxies was a face-saving compromise with potentially anarchic and bloody consequences. The Russians, committed to withdrawing troops, acceded to the Reagan Administration's eleventh-hour demand in order to reach an agreement. It would have been far better for all parties involved—for Pakistan and for the 5 million refugees in that country and Iran—to nail down the political preconditions for a new government and to seal off all arms shipments before signing any agreement. However, U.N. mediator Diego Cordovez has indicated that he will continue to negotiate with the parties in Afghanistan to build a coalition government. His chances would improve if the two superpowers agreed to turn off the flow of arms.

What needs to be done now in order to avoid a continuing and brutal war? Gorbachev has expressed interest in the possibility of a regional settlement in which the mutual interests of the superpowers are taken into account. In recent months, Gorbachev has suggested that a successful resolution in Afghanistan might pave the way for superpower cooperation in settling other regional conflicts. On April 11 he told Yasir Arafat that the best way to resolve the Middle East impasse is an international conference. Gorbachev also seems to understand that Afghanistan is just one of a series of fundamentalist political conflicts in the region. In his words and deeds, the Soviet leader has indicated that his country wants to join the world community, as a constructive and stable great power, both bilaterally and through the United Nations.

The political will to resolve the brutal and costly war in Afghanistan exists on one side. The Reagan Administration should take this unprecedented opportunity to test the possibilities of positive joint action.

COMING UP

Debt and Ecocide, by Susan George

Brazil on the Brink, by Linda Rabben

Reagan v. Walsh

The war on special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh is a two-front affair, one legal, one political. The legal battle is over the constitutionality of the independent counsel's office. The political battle is over the idea of granting presidential pardons to Lieut. Col. Oliver North and Rear Adm. John Poindexter. While the pardon speculation draws most of the public attention, the legal proceedings are more important. On April 26, the Supreme Court will hear arguments on the constitutionality of the independent counsel law.

The case depends on how the Court interprets the doctrine of separation of powers embodied in Article II of the Constitution, which concerns the appointive powers of the President and Congress, and Article III, which deals with the judiciary. The points of law get pretty arcane, but it is safe to say that the Administration's hopes depend on the Court's willingness to engage in judicial activism.

The Supreme Court case is the final round of the legislative-executive power struggle that began in 1982 over the conduct of the Environmental Protection Agency. When two House committees attempted to probe allegations of impropriety in the E.P.A., the Administration claimed executive privilege to withhold relevant documents. Under increasing pressure from Congress and the press, it backed down and turned over the documents. Later, the House Judiciary Committee learned that still more documents had been withheld.

The Judiciary Committee then demanded that an independent counsel investigate the Justice Department and White House officials who allegedly had run the cover-up. Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d agreed to request a special prosecutor in the case of former Assistant Attorney General Theodore Olson. But when Olson challenged the constitutional authority of the prosecutor, Alexia Morrison, the Administration supported him. Olson lost the first round in court.

Enter Laurence Silberman. He is the Federal Appeals Court judge who, in January 1988, delighted the Administration by ruling the independent counsel law unconstitutional. Silberman, a former adviser to the Republican National Committee, also served as a Reagan foreign policy adviser during the 1980 presidential campaign. He was appointed to the bench by Reagan in 1985. Silberman had at least a coincidental interest in the Administration's secret dealings with Iran.

In October 1980, Silberman and two other Reagan aides secretly met with a representative of the Iranian government to discuss the fate of the American hostages. The meeting, according to Silberman, was arranged by Robert McFarlane, then a Senate staff member. McFarlane has since pleaded guilty to charges of withholding information from Congress. Thus, the judge who decided on the constitutionality of special prosecutors had himself been involved in a secret meeting with the Iran government over the fate of American hostages and had at least a brief working relationship with a man under investigation by a special prosecutor.

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Federal law says judges should disqualify themselves if they have a "substantial interest" in the case or are "connected with" parties to it. Prof. Geoffrey Hazard Jr. of Yale Law School, one of the country's leading authorities on judicial ethics, says that the October 1980 meeting alone "would not be enough to create a basis for disqualification." Hazard said in Silberman's case, a "personal or professional relationship over a period of time" would have been requisite for a conflict of interest. A clerk for Silberman said that the judge did not know McFarlane "professionally," only "casually." But, when reminded of the 1980 meeting, Silberman said via the clerk that he "did not work that much with McFarlane at that time."

In any case, Silberman could not have written an opinion more supportive of the Administration's position if he had been Ed Meese's accountant. Silberman justified his usurpation of legislative intent with the strained argument that criminal prosecution is a "core presidential function" not transferable to an independent counsel. As Alexia Morrison notes in her brief for the Supreme Court, the "contention that the entire prosecutorial function vests absolutely in the executive is all too opportunistic."

The Supreme Court's decision is expected by early July. If the Silberman ruling is upheld, President Reagan and Vice President Bush will be spared the need to consider a pardon.

JEFFERSON MORLEY

Jackson and Jews

New York City Mayor Edward Koch's attacks on Jesse Jackson before this week's primary exceeded the limits of decency, fairness, good taste and political responsibility. It is equally clear that many Jewish community leaders, frequently self-appointed and always self-important, are not interested in what Jackson has said and done since 1984. They seek not peace but a rhetorical sword. A growing number of Jews, however, both in and out of the official religious community (fewer than half of America's Jews belong to synagogues), have concluded that there are compelling reasons to support Jackson. Many others, not at all inclined to accept that the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations speaks directly for Jehovah, still have profound doubts. Although attracted by Jackson's passion and his program, they cannot set aside the suspicion that he has insufficiently overcome anti-Semitism.

Much ink and many words have been expended on Jackson's appeal to economically and socially threatened whites, on his success with farmers and workers. That many of those once supported George Wallace has been noted. Much less has been said of the fact that Jackson has brought a message of hope and solidarity to regions in which a virulent anti-Semitism has been barely underground: Paranoid tracts on Jewish finance and conventicles of the enraged are circulated in the farm belt. Much of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century populism was xenophobic, anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic. Jackson's insistence that the current problems are those of economic exploitation and his assertion that by overcoming prejudice and voting for a black man Americans can gain inner freedom combine in an effective repudiation of notions of America as an Aryan nation. We need not go as far back as the turn of the century: Recall Father Charles Coughlin, the Rev. Gerald Smith and the anti-Semitic agitation of the Depression, or attacks on "Franklin Rosenfeld and the Jew Deal." The security of Jews in America rests not on the obvious prosperity and political influence of the Jewish community but on the dissipation of hatred in society at large.

Some Jewish leaders deny legitimacy to Jackson for the same reason that many black leaders have been wary of him: He speaks directly to the public. The chairs, presidents and executive directors of Jewish organizational life see themselves as persons of substance, and they much prefer to negotiate with the (authorized) spokesmen of other groups. All share a tacit understanding that American pluralism isn't a free political market; it is one in which a few ethnic and religious firms agree on market share. They are indignant that Jackson doesn't think Jewish support of the black community's campaign against apartheid in South Africa requires compensatory discretion on Palestinian rights. And there may be a deeper stratum of resentment: No Jewish politician has dared challenge American anti-Semitism by seeking a place on a major party's presidential ticket.

The assumption that America is primarily an agglomeration of groups contradicts, of course, the ideas of citizenship and nation that inspired the American Revolution. Many American Jews prefer these ideas to the narrow interest-group politics espoused by numerous Jewish groups. Deeper still may lie other hopes and fears. Since the Holocaust, a considerable number of Jews do not believe that any national community, or above all any general idea of humanity, can be trusted. The February 1988 issue of *Commentary* contains a symposium on American Jews and Israel. What is striking about many of the contributions is the frenzied and vicious tone in which they accuse American Jewish critics of Israel of a naïve, even infantile, belief in general moral standards. These critics, the essays argue, are so corrupted by absurdly utopian beliefs in a human community (one that encompasses even Palestinian rights) that they reject what should be their primary loyalty—to kin.

A Darwinian view of American national existence as a struggle between groups is certainly consonant with the economic and social positions of the neoconservatives. It was Midge Decter who declared that "compassion" is a term she cannot abide. The pages of *The Public Interest* are full of articles by young Jewish technocrats who may well be able to abide the emotion but who insist that it would cost too much. It is the most liberal leaders of the Jewish community (e.g., Rabbi Alexander Schindler, Rabbi David Saperstein, Rabbi Balfour Brickner) who are most ready to accept Jackson's apologies and begin anew on common ground. Still, doubt persists among many Jews who might otherwise be thought receptive to Jackson's message.

Jackson grew up in circumstances in which he can hardly have met whites, Jewish or not, on equal terms. He was not

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senior enough in the civil rights movement to have had the kind of contacts with Jewish groups that fell to Ralph Abernathy and Martin Luther King Jr. Jackson has often told his Jewish friends that the histories of the two peoples in America are different. For Jackson, a Jewish working class is a historical datum, not a personal memory.

But Jackson is capable of learning, as I saw myself when I traveled to Europe with him in 1985. At the invitation of a group of European parliamentarians, he visited Strasbourg, France, on the day of President Reagan's visit to the cemetery in Bitburg, West Germany, that holds Nazi war dead. Jackson spoke that day at a ceremony in honor of the European resistance, on the site of the Struthof concentration camp in Alsace. The next day, we were guests of the peace movement and the Protestant Church in West Berlin. I introduced Jackson to Heinz Galinski, the head of the Berlin Jewish community, who promptly raised the question of Jackson's attitude to Jewry and to Israel. Jackson responded that blacks could hardly be charged with overlooking oppression. American black soldiers, he recalled, were among the first into the concentration camps. The Germans were freed of Nazism and eventually restored to nationhood, the Jews were liberated from their scourge and the survivors able to construct a new state, but the blacks went home to poverty and segregation. Later, Jackson told the Germans that he had come not to castigate them for the past but to urge them to learn from their national experience and join with the rest of us in developing a more humane global society. Talking with Jackson on the trip, I was struck by his ability, when confronted with witnesses and survivors of the European tragedy (not least the tragedy of the Jews) to make it concrete in his imagination, incorporating it in that process of redemption that seems to be a theological fundament of his thought.

It is the interplay of history, theology and psyche that causes a good deal of the trouble. To Jews, anti-Semitism is, if not incurable, a disease that calls for immediate quarantine. Yet, when Jackson ended his association with Black Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan, he added what some Jews thought was a gratuitous qualification: No one, he said, is beyond redemption. Jews, whatever their political persuasion, whether children of the Enlightenment or Hasidim, live with memories of disasters past and fears of those that could come, no matter how outwardly secure they might appear. In the light of history, they are skeptical about lessons on redemption, not least the Christian ones. Jackson's vision of Jewry is of a group fully integrated into American society and in possession of a powerful state in Israel. Those with power and wealth, he holds, should redeem themselves by sharing it. This is a conflict of historical interpretations made more tense by the contrast between the many American Jews who have risen above adversity and the many blacks who are struggling to extricate themselves from it.

To this conflict is added something else: Jackson's enormous personal pride. He is very disappointed about what he sees as unremitting efforts to keep him on trial, with no prospect of acquittal or rehabilitation or pardon, in perpetuity. Certainly, there is something obsessive and excessively harsh in many of the attacks on him, in the reiteration of matters already repeatedly discussed, in the rejection of Jackson's proposal that Jews and blacks find a new common agenda. The official Jewish leadership has shown itself rather more forgiving in the recent past. When Gen. George Brown, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, declared in 1974 that Jews owned the banks, the press and everything else, most Jewish leaders were at pains to smooth things over. In 1986, West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl was waited upon by a Jewish delegation, which thanked him fulsomely for something he did not and cannot give—effective support in Moscow for human rights for Soviet Jewry. Kohl's complicity in the recent revival of German anti-Semitism was conspicuously overlooked. The political support given Israel by American fundamentalists has been gratefully accepted, despite their avowal that the establishment of the Jewish state is evidence that the conversion of the Jews (and the disappearance of those who do not convert) cannot be far off. When Jackson challenged Gorbachev in Geneva on human rights for Soviet Jewry, the gesture was dismissed as symbolic at best, cynical at worst. The powerful, it appears, get a good deal more consideration.

On the Middle East, Jackson did anticipate events. He warned, as did prescient Israelis and American Jews, that unless the Palestinians' rights were recognized there would be no peace for Israel. His meetings with Yasir Arafat in 1979 broke, of course, a political taboo—but the bloody impasse in which Israel finds itself will not be ended unless and until others also learn to break taboos. Jackson now declares that he thinks Arafat should recognize Israel. He also says that, while he would not condemn Israel for its present policies, the antagonists' death grip must be ended. The conflict has become so acute, so visible, that Jackson's earlier position now seems unexceptionable. Jewish responses to it reflect, again, the inner divisions within American Jewry and Israel itself. Those whose imagery of Jewish existence is that of a perpetual siege, of a single people united, are repelled by his endorsement of Palestinian rights. They respond in the same way to the positions of the European Community, to Secretary of State George Shultz's meeting with the American Palestinians, to the letter sent by thirty U.S. Senators to Shultz critical of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. Not much said about Jackson can equal the rage found in the pages of that February issue of *Commentary*—a rage directed not against a black tribune but against other Jews.

Nothing obliges even the most liberal or reflective of American Jews to vote for Jackson. We are obliged, however, to recognize that the argument over Jackson among Jews is often a surrogate for other arguments that we would do better to confront directly. We would also do well to remember that our own history teaches us that it is unwise to ignore and even worse to abuse prophets. Saturated by Old Testament visions, the settlers in America thought of themselves as founding a new Israel. Is it too much to ask of American Jews that we reflect that, as long as we live here (in a pluralistic society, which cannot do without a decent minimum of oneness), the blacks and their leader are also our kin?

NORMAN BIRNBAUM

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BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN AND JEFFERSON MORLEY

■ If This Is What Their Friends Think . . .

Confronted with allegations of *contra* drug smuggling, conservatives often become apoplectic, at least in public. In private they are far less skeptical. In April 1985, for instance, Rob Owen, Oliver North's courier, wrote a frank memorandum to his boss about *contra* drug smuggling. A recently released deposition taken by investigators of the Iran/*contra* committees shows other *contra* supporters shared Owen's suspicions.

The witness, Jane McLaughlin, a former employee of *contra* fund-raiser Carl (Spitz) Channell, recalled a meeting held at her boss's office in 1986, after the news broke that Channell was handling millions of dollars for North's *contra* support network. At that meeting one Channell aide said that the story had been leaked by UNO, the *contra* organization. The rebels, he explained, believed Channell had gypped them out of some of the money he had raised. "God only knows what they would have done with it if we had given it to them directly," the aide said, according to McLaughlin. By her account, that prompted Krishna Littledale, another Channell fund-raiser, to blurt out, "Well, you know how the Latins are. You know how they run drugs and use women." No one in the room, McLaughlin said, challenged the remark.

■ Springsteen's Freeze-Out

In 1984, Bruce Springsteen was a footnote in the presidential campaign. Ronald Reagan invoked the rocker's name while on the stump, provoking a mini-ruckus and showing just how far out of the groove the Chief was. Springsteen, on his own tour at the time, brought an unmistakable progressive political message to his concerts. He revived Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land," muttered some comments about arms control and belted out "War" ("What is it good for? Absolutely nothing"). At most stops Springsteen made well-publicized contributions to local activist groups, such as food banks for the unemployed, and urged fans to do the same.

Such populism would play well against the 1988 campaign, but in his current tour the Boss has, for the most part, shelved his political message in favor of more private themes. He still sings "War" and has added the antinuclear "Roulette" to his repertoire. At a stop in the Washington area he took a swipe at hypocritical TV preachers, declaring that Jerry Falwell could "kiss my ass twice." That's as far as he ventured politically. While some left-leaning fans may be disappointed, perhaps the rocker fears becoming a preacher himself. As Springsteen has counseled in the past, "Trust the art, not the artist."

Springsteen may have made his most straightforward political statement of the tour before a recent concert in Washington. It's a story denied by Springsteen's office, but, according to a local television reporter, a receptionist at the Capitol Centre arena said that Fawn Hall had shown up, asking to meet Springsteen. The receptionist relayed Hall's request backstage. A message came back: Springsteen wasn't interested; he doesn't think Oliver North is a hero; and, besides, Hall is a Republican and Springsteen a Democrat.

■ Sing Along With Tipper

Even without Springsteen, the Democratic convention could be a major musical as well as political event. Already it is rumored that Aretha Franklin will sing the National Anthem, but let's go further. We nominate disc jockey Casey Kassem, a Jackson supporter, to serve as M.C. Stevie Wonder could sing "Hotter Than July" for Jackson—backed up by Kris Kristofferson, who has given Jackson $1,000, the maximum amount an individual can donate (perhaps as added repentance for his role in *Amerika*). Art Garfunkel, who contributed $1,000 to Michael Dukakis, could warble a verse or two of "Bridge Over Troubled Water" for his candidate. And if Al Gore is still anywhere to be found in the race, he could be introduced by his supporter Country Joe McDonald. McDonald was the backwoods hippie who got up in front of 400,000 impressionable youths at Woodstock in 1969—was Gore there?—and yelled, "Gimme an 'F'! Gimme a 'U'! Gimme a 'C'! Gimme a. . . . " Tipper Gore must remember how the rest of the song goes.

■ Irvine Aims for C.I.A.

A Freedom of Information Act request has unearthed from C.I.A. files the following revealing correspondence.

On August 27, 1984, Reed Irvine, who begat Accuracy in Media, wrote a letter to C.I.A. chief William Casey. "Dear Bill," he began, then launched into a complaint about press reports that U.S. intelligence had concluded the Russians were unaware they had targeted a civilian airliner when they attacked Korean Air Lines Flight 007 in 1983. "My own checks with the intelligence agencies convinced me that this was not the view of any of the intelligence agencies," Irvine wrote. Nevertheless, he groused, the media were disseminating this story, which contradicted statements made by Reagan officials after the shoot-down. Irvine offered Casey the services of AIM in defending the original Reagan line and asked the master spy for a written assurance "that we are on solid ground in doing so."

"We are obviously seeing a massive disinformation effort being mounted as the anniversary of the tragedy approaches," Irvine noted. "Are we going to accept this passively, or will we do something about it? I would like to be of help." In his "Dear Reed" response, Casey said that as much as he appreciated Irvine's offer, he had to "remain silent to protect the sensitive information and sources that enable us to do our job." Obviously Irvine's intelligence sources aren't reliable. In January, Representative Lee Hamilton released declassified portions of U.S. intelligence assessments confirming that the "Soviets thought they were pursuing a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft," not a civilian airliner. More to the point, the letter provides further proof—if any were needed—that Irvine, eager to do the bidding of the C.I.A., is not the independent watchdog he pretends to be. As on past occasions, he did not return our telephone call.

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

The Kiss of Death

It should not, at least in theory, require a Democratic presidential primary to remind one of the foulness of New York City's political culture, which is now of unmatched toxicity. New York is, after all, a city that boasts among its spiritual guides Ed Koch, Al D'Amato, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Cardinal O'Connor, George Steinbrenner, Morton Downey Jr., Howard Stern and A.M. Rosenthal. No other town in the United States condemns its inhabitants to listen to men like these on a virtually daily basis. Hardened though one might be, seasoned by the memory of similar primaries in years gone by, the effect of New York on the campaign has been striking nonetheless. The place really does bring out the worst in people.

Only New York provokes, at this most morally degraded intensity, the sickening rhetorical rituals mandatory in grubbing for the Jewish vote. First came the grotesque spectacle of Al Gore baiting Michael Dukakis for insufficient fervor toward Israel. Everyone knows that Dukakis has been a model of traditional Democratic cowardice on this issue, though less craven than Gore, who openly went begging to pro-Likud contributors, from whom Dukakis kept his distance. Then Gore got respectful attention in the press for proclaiming that Jesse Jackson had disqualified himself from pretension to high office by placing Israeli and Palestinian aspirations on the same moral plane.

Was it not possible for one of those editorialists, columnists or reporters to ask Gore and Dukakis how they felt about Israeli soldiers forcing an Arab up a telegraph pole until finally he was electrocuted? Or to ask if Gore or Dukakis was prepared to condemn the Israeli Army for blowing up houses in the village of Beita *after* the army had established that Tirza Porat had been killed by a shot from the Gush Emunim fanatic Rumam Aldubi? Does anyone feel any qualm that here are men seeking high office who have nothing to say about the forcible internment without trial of almost 5,000 people; who have felt themselves unable to criticize the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, for calling Palestinians "grasshoppers"? Why doesn't the press, eager to remind the world for the millionth time about Jackson's "Hymietown," challenge the two white candidates to speak out on this or any of the innumerable racist statements from Israeli leaders about Palestinians?

In the end New York showed that in a crunch Jackson could be as spineless as his rivals. On *Face the Nation* on April 10 he was asked by Lesley Stahl, "Would you sit down with Arafat?" Jackson: "I would not. It is not necessary to do that. We must not equate Arafat and the P.L.O. with a sovereign people—the Palestinian people. . . . We have to search for the quality and combination of leadership on both sides, whether it's Abba Eban or Peres on the one hand, or more sensitive Arabs or Palestinians on the other." His concern, Jackson told Stahl, was "that we must somehow get Israel beyond the burden of occupation, and the Palestinians beyond the pain of being occupied." Jackson made these evenhanded observations shortly after Porat's funeral, at which Israel's Minister of Religious Affairs, Zevulun Hammer, said, "Beita does not exist on the map of Israel. A settlement should be built there and be named Tirza Porat." Shamir said the killing strengthened the determination to hold on to all of the "land of Israel." Some burden.

If Jackson ends up talking like a *New York Times* editorial, then what is the point of the Jackson campaign? A lot of American Jews have supported Jackson precisely because he has—though decreasingly so in recent weeks—refused to abide by the moral double standard endemic to all discussion of Israel and the Palestinians. Which is the more morally compromising embrace for an American politician: a hug from Arafat or one from Shamir? It is Shamir and his Likud associates who speak of obliterating Palestinians, of deporting them. It is Labor's Rabin who approves the internments, curfews, mutilations, blowings up, deportations. How many U.S. politicians feel compromised by their embraces?

Jackson told Lesley Stahl he would not talk to Arafat until the P.L.O. leader voiced explicit recognition of Israel's right to exist. A few weeks ago I wrote here that Arafat should be clearer about this, if only to overwhelm by repetition the refusal of the U.S. press to recognize recent P.L.O. statements on this subject. (I also suggested he might shave so as to look better on network TV, which was cheap. If he looked like Pat Boone it wouldn't make any difference.) But Arafat was explicit shortly thereafter in an interview on March 12 with Youssef Ibrahim and Anthony Lewis, both of *The New York Times*. As Ibrahim wrote, "When Mr. Arafat was asked again if he was prepared to make peace with the Israeli government he responded, 'Yes, definitely,'" reiterating respect for the relevant U.N. resolutions. Anthony Lewis confirmed this the following day. Jackson may be short on advice, but surely someone can clip the papers for him. When the candidates sitting in the *New York Times* offices urge Arafat to accept 242 and 338, why don't their interviewers remind them of Arafat's recognition of same, recorded in the questioners' own newspaper?

The candidate's miserable performance with Stahl provoked a hail of furious phone calls to the Jackson campaign. Hani Masri, an Arab-American and Republican, debated whether to cancel a big fund-raiser for Jackson in Washington. James Abourezk, head of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, said, "If you're going to give up your principles, get something out of it. Jackson got nothing. He can't just slowly back away from what he said to Stahl; he has to make a substantive correction." By the next morning Jackson had invited Edward Said to stand by his side at a political breakfast and subsequent press conference, and when asked by Gabe Pressman of the NBC affiliate in New York whether he supported the idea of a Palestinian state, Jackson said "Absolutely," without equivocation. But neither then nor in subsequent debates did he correct his statements on *Face the Nation*.

The Jackson campaign should stop being defensive and remember some important points. A Gallup poll in March showed that 58 percent of all Americans believe that Israel

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should recognize the P.L.O.; 53 percent say the United States should deal with the P.L.O.; 41 percent say U.S. aid to Israel should be decreased, while only 7 percent say it should be increased. Second, as a sovereign people, which Jackson says they are, the Palestinians should be able to select their own representatives. No one tells Israel who should represent it. Third, on the issues of land for peace and self-determination, the United States is outside the world consensus of Common Market countries, the African bloc, the Islamic bloc, the Non-Aligned countries, the Socialist bloc. Finally, Jackson should remind the country that it is the Palestinians who are being interned, expelled and tortured.

Pleasure Unalloyed

I'm against all journalism prizes, but if any foreign correspondent of *The New York Times* deserved a Pulitzer it certainly wasn't Thomas Friedman, who has done a rotten job as bureau chief in Jerusalem, mostly timid and sometimes actively deceptive, in contrast to John Kifner, who is a good reporter and certainly deserves recognition more than his colleague. A.P.'s April 1 story on the Pulitzers began: "The last time . . . Thomas L. Friedman won a Pulitzer Prize he said the moment was marred because he received the news while covering the bombing of the American Embassy in Beirut. On Thursday, though, the second Pulitzer for international reporting for The New York Times writer was 'unalloyed, untinged by any tragedy,' Friedman said."

One Hand Clapping

This business of not sitting down with people is getting out of hand. A couple of months ago Lewis Lapham, editor of *Harper's*, invited Abba Eban and Edward Said to participate in an unstructured discussion that would then be transcribed, edited and published. Both parties accepted, with many confirmations and reconfirmations. On the very day set for discussion, April 2, Said was preparing for the encounter when, at 10:30 A.M., Lapham called saying that he had just had breakfast with Eban, who had stated that by meeting with George Shultz, Said had become a public figure; that he, Eban, therefore needed protection; and that he preferred that each of them be submitted, separately, fifteen questions that each would answer, separately, thus averting the perils of contact or repartee. Said told Lapham that for several days he had been concerned by the prospect of meeting with a member of the Knesset, whose army is massacring and otherwise abusing his people. But he was, Said added, ready to participate under the original terms. This was relayed to Eban, who said no and hung up.

The Oxford Union similarly asked Said and former Israeli ambassador to the United Nations Benjamin Netanyahu to face off, but Netanyahu refused. So did Charles Krauthammer, who initially agreed to debate Said on Morton Kondracke's show, *American Interests*, but pulled out. It seems odd for people constantly emphasizing Palestinian refusal to engage with the reality and existence of Israel to refuse to put any willingness to negotiate to the test.

Backscratching

While we are on this subject of who may or may not sit down with whom, consider this sequence of events, suggestive of close encounters of the most confidential kind. On March 29, Richard Schifter, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, testified before Congress that Israel "not only has the right but the obligation" to restore order in the territories it has held since 1967 and "to use appropriate levels of force to accomplish that end."

Schifter's testimony was a nice favor to Israel. Next day came the public announcement that Swiss financier Bruce Rappaport had, earlier in the month, backed out of giving an important deposition to the special prosecutor investigating Ed Meese's part in Bechtel's Iraqi pipeline deal. Rappaport had helped broker an agreement whereby the Israeli Labor Party and its leader, Shimon Peres, would be recompensed for taking a cooperative attitude to the pipeline deal (i.e., agreeing not to blow it up). Rappaport had been scheduled to give sworn testimony about Meese's role, but all of a sudden this intimate of Peres declined because, according to *Washington Post* sources, "he was afraid he might not remember everything accurately." The special prosecutor forthwith announced that Meese was, for now, off the hook.

The Crazy Lady and Captain Hook

Since this column has been somewhat concerned with New York, I should quote from a document richly illustrative of a segment of the city's intellectual life, namely Midge Decter's "Contentions," kennel organ of the Committee for the Free World. Most of the eight-page newsletter is devoted to an R.I.P. for the *contras* and a thrashing for Woody Allen, but there's an outburst by Sidney Hook against Alan Wald's *The New York Intellectuals*, which is pretty predictable until the final exhilarating paragraph:

> It is significant that one of the most enthusiastic endorsers of Wald's book is Alfred Kazin, who dissociates himself only from the "fervor" of Wald's ultra-revolutionary Trotskyism but not from its political line. His strategy is apparent. If Kazin's newly found revolutionary integrity and sincerity were questioned, he could claim that he is not as "fervent" as Wald. The explanation of Kazin's unfervent Trotskyism (for this occasion only!) is very simple. Wald attacks as apostates from Trotskyist dogma writers like Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, Lionel Trilling, and a dozen others, including myself, who have taxed Kazin with fictionalizing his past, "inventing the truth" about himself. Kazin is willing to risk guilt by association as a revolutionary Trotskyist to revenge himself vicariously against those whom he has maligned.

Magnifique, mais très nutty, no? I should disclose that in the fall issue of *Dissent*, Alfred Kazin called me "a Jew hater." Ben Sonnenberg sent in a letter of protest, and Kazin promptly changed direction in the winter issue, announcing, "No, Cockburn is not a 'Jew-hater,' but I am certainly a Cockburn-hater." Decent of him, don't you think? Maybe he'll change his mind again in the spring issue. That's the way it is in New York.

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ARTICLES.

THE RIGHT'S GREATER ISRAEL

No Land, No Peace For Palestinians

ROBERT I. FRIEDMAN

The Palestinian uprising that has rocked the Jewish state in recent months has, ironically, given a major political boost to Israel's radical right—a powerful religious-nationalist movement whose goal is to annex the occupied territories and expel Israel's Arabs. Fueled by a blend of biblical prophecy and *Realpolitik*, the radical right contends that God gave the land of Israel, which includes the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, to the Jewish people. The Palestinians are considered "resident strangers" or descendants of the Amalek, the biblical tribe destroyed by the ancient Hebrews.

These hard-line views are gaining ground, according to a recent Israeli poll, which found that the Arab riots have strengthened the radical right. Israeli pollster Hanoch Smith's latest survey, conducted in March, revealed that support for the violently anti-Arab Kach Party, headed by Rabbi Meir Kahane, had increased from 1 percent to 3 percent, which represents about four seats in the Knesset, while support for the ultraright Tehiya Party rose from 4 percent to 7 percent. Moreover, the poll revealed that 74 percent of the Israelis questioned agreed with the government's "Iron Fist" policy in the occupied territories, up from 49 percent in late December.

The radical right is no longer a lone voice on the fringe of Israeli politics. The dark, fundamentalist views of the mystical-Messianic movement Gush Emunim (which has spearheaded Israel's West Bank settlement drive and is close to both the Tehiya and Likud Parties) and of Kahane's party, which has a seat in the Knesset, have seeped into mainstream public debate in Israel. According to a late December survey by Smith, more than one-third of the public supports the concept of expelling Israel's Arabs. "It's becoming much more legitimate to talk about deporting the Arabs," as a consequence of the uprising, agrees Danny Rubinstein, veteran West Bank correspondent for *Davar*, a Hebrew-language daily affiliated with the Labor Party.

The radical right has responded to the disturbances by threatening the Palestinians with wholesale deportation and vigilante violence. "Gush Emunim recently issued a warning to West Bank Arabs that if they draw one drop of Jewish blood, then the settlers will respond in kind," says Ehud Sprinzak, a Hebrew University expert on right-wing extremist groups. "They told the Arabs to remember what happened in 1948, when many of them had to leave." During a rampage through the Arab village of Bethany in February, settlers from nearby Ma'aleh Edumim scattered leaflets in crude Arabic stating, "You must fear us more than you fear terrorists"—a reference to the Palestine Liberation Organization, which the settlers claim is inciting the disturbances.

More recently, Gush Emunim leader Daniella Weiss called for the "obliteration" of the Arab village of Beita after a melee there between Palestinians and Jewish hikers from the ultranationalist settlement of Elon Moreh left one settler and two Palestinians dead. Romam Aldubi, a fanatic member of Kach who had been banned by the army from nearby Nablus, accidentally shot to death a 15-year-old Jewish settler during the clash, which he provoked, according to Israeli newspaper accounts quoting Israeli army sources.

Incited by such incidents, right-wing politicians are once again promoting plans for a "transfer," the euphemism used in Israel for expulsion of Arabs. Gush Emunim patron Yuval Ne'eman, a Knesset member from the Tehiya Party, told settlers in Samaria at a meeting in early March that he had proposed a five-point plan to the government to quell the disturbances, which includes deporting all demonstrators and their families. Rafael Eitan, his hard-line colleague in the Knesset and the army's chief of staff during the Lebanon invasion (who once referred to West Bank Arabs as drugged cockroaches in a bottle), offered a less complicated way of handling demonstrators. He said in a February 28 speech that the army should simply gun down any Arab throwing a stone or a bottle. "If war breaks out and they make trouble, then we'll simply have to deport a million people," he told *The Jerusalem Post* in March.

Encouraged by such views, Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been increasingly taking the law into their own hands. Armed posses travel through the territories attacking Arab towns and villages at will, sometimes acting as paramilitary units alongside the army. At least five Arabs have been shot dead by settlers in recent months, including a 13-year-old girl who was reported to have died in an Israeli hospital. She was hit when settlers opened fire on Arab rioters in the northern West Bank village of Baqa al-Sharqiyya.

The locus of West Bank Jewish extremism is Kiryat Arba, a large fortified settlement that sits on a hillside above Hebron. At least four "self-defense" groups have been formed there, including one band of armed vigilantes led by Shmuel Ben Ishai, a Kach Party activist who is currently under investigation in ten different criminal cases in Israel. Ben Ishai's group, which may number as many as a hundred Kach activists, has organized a number of pogroms against Hebron and neighboring Arab villages and refugee camps. "They [the Arabs] are not afraid of the soldiers, but they are afraid of us," Ben Ishai recently boasted. "They have experience with us."

This is not the first time vigilantism has reared its head in the territories. According to a 1983 report by a blue-ribbon commission headed by Israel's Deputy Attorney General, Yehudit Karp, Jewish vigilante attacks against West Bank

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Arabs had become a fact of life in the early 1980s. The Karp commission found that few indictments had been brought against Jewish vigilantes, because right-wing Knesset members were intervening to stop police and army investigations. More ominously, in an imitation of Latin American right-wing death squads, settlers also have spawned several anti-Arab terrorist underground organizations, which are responsible for a wave of bombings and shootings, including the June 1980 maiming of two Palestinian mayors.

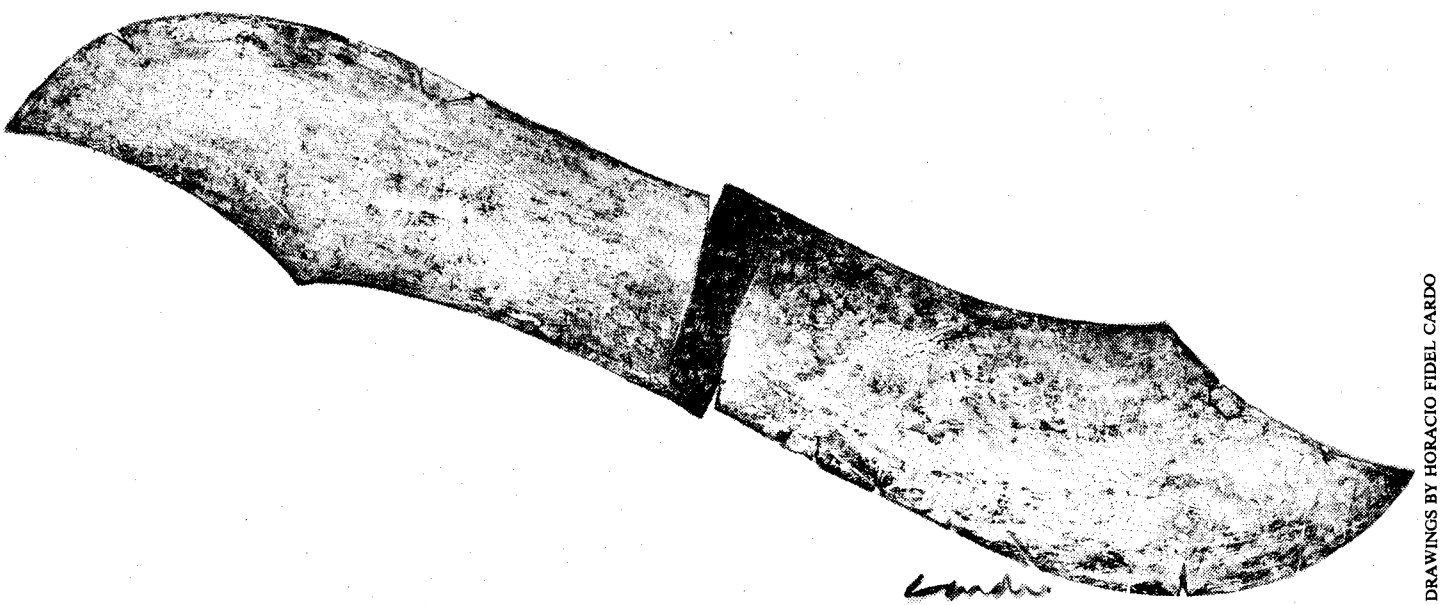
Ze'ev Schiff, *Ha'aretz*'s respected military affairs editor, warned in a series of articles in 1987 that there are Israeli Defense Force units that are responsible for patrolling the occupied territories, "in which most soldiers belong to Gush Emunim or are close to the Gush in their opinions." Schiff recommended that these politically homogeneous regional defense units, whose officers and soldiers live in the settlements, be disbanded before they pose a threat to Israel's security. To date, the army has taken no action.

The calls for wholesale deportations are not a recent phenomenon. The radical right and its backers in the Knesset have long advocated expelling the Arabs living in the occupied territories. Last July, more than five months before the Palestinian rebellion, Israel's Deputy Defense Minister, Michael Dekel, a Likud senior member, called for expulsion. Last November, Yosef Shapira, a minister without portfolio in the Israeli Cabinet and from the National Religious Party, proposed that the government pay $20,000 to any Arab willing to emigrate from the occupied territories. Soon after, former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon said Israel should stop talking about Shapira's proposal and carry it out.

As long ago as 1974, then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, a Labor Party hawk much admired by the right, urged the country to "create in the course of the next ten or twenty years conditions which would attract natural and voluntary migration of the refugees from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to Jordan. To achieve this we have to come to agreement with King Hussein and not with Yasir Arafat." Those less patient than Rabin are in favor of exploiting a future Arab-Israeli war to expel 700,000 to 800,000 Arabs. "Such a plan exists," Gen. Aharon Yariv, former head of military intelligence, said in Israel several years ago, "and the means to execute it have been prepared."

Some Jewish fundamentalists have quietly argued that there is nothing wrong with using genocide to deal with the Arab problem. In 1984, Rabbi Moshe Segal, who was aligned with Irgun, Menachem Begin's terrorist underground, wrote a letter on behalf of a committee that was collecting legal defense funds for Gush Emunim, in which he compared the Arab residents of the occupied territories to the Amalek tribe. "One should have mercy on all creatures . . . but the treatment of Amalek—is different. The treatment of those who would steal our land—is different. The treatment of those who spill our blood—is different." Then, quoting Numbers 33, Segal wrote: "You must drive out all the inhabitants of the land as you advance . . . and settle there, for to you have I given the land to possess it. . . . But if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the land as you advance, any whom you let remain shall be as barbed hooks in your eyes, and as thorns in your sides. They shall continually dispute your possession of the land in which you dwell. And what I meant to do to them I will do to you."

Israeli liberals criticized Segal's letter as being tantamount to advocating genocide. But Segal's is not an isolated case. Recently, Rabbi Israel Hess, a noted scholar at Israel's Bar Ilan University, in an article titled "The Genocide Ruling of Torah" published in the university's official magazine, also compared the Arabs to the Amaleks, whose extermination was mandated by the Torah. And Rabbi Kahane, who often attends the funerals of Israelis killed by Arab terrorists, looking for recruits for his movement, preaches that revenge is holy. After a young Sephardic Jew from a Jerusalem slum fired a U.S.-made antitank rocket at an Arab bus several years ago, killing one and wounding many more, Kahane made the man an honorary member of Kach, paid for his lawyer and said his act was "sanctified by God." "Our God is a god of vengeance," said a Kach bulletin distributed in Jerusalem last November. "It's non-



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sense to assume vengeance is not a Jewish concept."

According to Ehud Sprinzak, the radical right does not consider these extraordinary concepts of revenge and genocide "illegitimate or abhorrent. More important, none has thus far been ruled out as erroneous by Israel's Chief Rabbinate, the highest official religious authority in the land. It is not clear whether the silence . . . is evidence of disapproval or of political prudence."

Although there has been widespread official condemnation of Kahane in Israel, many government officials have been reluctant to criticize Gush Emunim because it represents the vanguard of those settling the occupied territories—an enterprise that has been endorsed by leaders of both the Labor and Likud Parties. There are currently more than 65,000 Jewish settlers on the West Bank, in 120 settlements. In January, in the midst of the Palestinian uprising, a new settlement was christened by Housing Minister David Levy, a Likud member. "Labor ministers [in the national unity government] are either unwilling, or unable, to interfere with the continuing settlement drive," Meron Benvenisti, a leading Israeli researcher on the West Bank, recently told the *Financial Times*.

Indeed, Israel has spent more than $400 million to expand existing settlements within the past few years, an astronomical sum for an economically hard pressed nation that depends on $3 billion in annual aid from the United States. Since 1977 "more than 100 settlements have gone up in Judea and Samaria," boasted Housing Minister Levy, who has hopes of becoming Israel's first Sephardic prime minister. "When I see that—with all the infrastructure and community facilities and planning for the future—all the talk about territorial compromise is an illusion," Levy has said.

Lest one dismiss Levy as being unduly melodramatic, consider that in November 1986 the Gush Emunim–dominated Council of Jewish Settlements in Judea and Samaria vowed to take up arms against the Israeli government if it tried to trade territory for peace with the Arabs. The settlers threatened there would be "the most horrible scene . . . mutiny in the army, an armed uprising in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, and finally, Jew fighting Jew."

More recently, Geula Cohen, the fiery hard-liner who bolted Likud and formed her own party, Tehiya, after the Sinai withdrawal, warned the Knesset in February that "Judea, Samaria and Gaza are not the Sinai. There will be a war here" if Israel gives up territory, as it did in 1982 as part of the Camp David accords.

The West Bank stirs powerful emotions in Israelis in a way the Sinai never did. The West Bank—Judea and Samaria—is the ancient homeland of the Hebrews, the locus of Jewish yearning through 2,000 years of tribulations. The radical right's political strength is derived in part from its ability to tap these powerful emotions. Nevertheless, Professor Sprinzak says that the radical right, which makes up about half the right-wing electorate, can be isolated from its more moderate allies, given the right combination of circumstances. "For that to happen," he says, "you need a lot more violence on the West Bank, with many more Arab and Jewish casualties, as well as increased international pressure, including political and economic sanctions against Israel. That would leave many moderate right-wing Israelis with the feeling, 'O.K., we want these territories, but it doesn't pay to keep them.' " In an attempt to prevent any softening of the Likud's position on the West Bank, Gush Emunim's Daniella Weiss said in February, "We have kept silent until now, but we are determined to raise our voices against the surrenderist trends in the national government." Weiss is currently leading a round-the-clock vigil in front of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's Jerusalem residence, urging a harsher crackdown on Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Meanwhile, there have been some murmurs of dissent in the Likud. In January, Shlomo Lahat, the Mayor of Tel Aviv, said that Israel would have to give back all of the West Bank and Gaza, except for Jerusalem. However, a Likud member of the Knesset, Moshe Amirav, who in the midst of the Palestinian disturbance declared that it was time to negotiate with the P.L.O., was tossed out of his party as a heretic. "Likud moderates are very cautious now about what they say," said an Israeli reporter. "There is not a single major Likud politician who will say that even part of the territories should be given up in a peace agreement."

So, as the Reagan Administration fumbles for a solution based on some notion of limited Palestinian autonomy, to be followed by a negotiated settlement based on territorial compromise between Israel and Jordan, the settlers and their cohorts clean their weapons and declare their violent intentions in no uncertain terms. Peace is not part of their vocabulary. They are sustained by a Messianic vision of a Greater Israel that has the power to impose itself on its neighbors. When Prime Minister Shamir says that the disturbances are "a war for Israel's survival," the survival he is talking about is defined by that biblical prophetic vision.

Israelis are now debating which they prefer: a Greater Israel or trading territory for peace with the Arabs. *Davar*'s Danny Rubinstein has called it a "repugnant choice between two equally disastrous alternatives. Either annex the occupied territories and continue to oppress the Arab population, or agree to face the consequences of what may escalate into civil war [between Jews]." Israel is already on the verge of becoming another Lebanon, where Jew is pitted against Jew, and Jew against Arab, in a never-ending round robin

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You Are In Danger ...

A deadly game is being played out in the Persian Gulf, day after day. The rules of the game are quite simple: ignore all rules except those which power and arrogance dictate. The game is "American" Roulette. A gun is held to the heart of every living being. The gun contains a potential nuclear charge.

Under a pretext of "protecting shipping" the U.S. has amassed its largest naval armada since World War II. It bombards Iranian ships and oil rigs, using American ships as hunters and decoys in the most dangerous waters in the world.

This is madness. It violates right reason and simple humanity. How can we accept U.S. claims to a "peacekeeping" role when the U.S. encouraged Iraq's 1980 invasion of Iran, then for seven years armed both sides in a war which has slaughtered one million people? How can we believe that U.S. policy is neutral, when it now intervenes on Iraq's side and seeks any excuse to label Iran the aggressor while wrapping its own aggressions in the cloak of "defense"?

In the polluted aftermath of Iran-Contragate, our government continues to embroil us in places we do not belong. The Persian Gulf is *not* an American Lake.

We cannot stand by in polite silence while more blood is shed and the world is brought to the brink of wider war. Our government claims full national unity in support of its actions in the Persian Gulf. In such times, to remain silent is to stand complicit.

We call upon you to join with us to break that silence. The time is now to raise our voices and actions in public opposition.

The deadly game continues.
The roulette wheel spins.
The hammer is cocked.
This madness must be stopped.

We must resist!

Eqbal Ahmad, *professor, Hampshire College*

Akil Al-Jundi, *Attica Rebellion Organizing Committee*

Emile de Antonio, *film maker*

Dore Ashton, *art critic*

Daniel Berrigan, S.J.

Karl Bissinger, *War Resisters League staff*

Fr. Bob Bossie, S.C.J.

Francis A. Boyle, *University of Illinois College of Law*

Dr. Margaret Brenman-Gibson, *Center for Psychological Studies in the Nuclear Age*

Dr. Margaret Burroughs, *artist and writer*

Mary and Dick Carbray, *Seattle*

Noam Chomsky

Melanie Collins, *Producer, WRFG Atlanta*

Jade Dell, *United Methodist layperson*

Dave Dellinger

Colleen Dewhurst, *actress*

Carl Dix, *Revolutionary Communist Party, U.S.A.*

Gloria Emerson, *author,* Winners and Losers

Larry Everest, *author,* Behind the Poison Cloud: Union Carbide's Bhopal Massacre

Jules Feiffer

Renny Golden, *co-author,* Sanctuary: The New Underground Railroad

Dick Gregory, *performer and health activist*

Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, *Detroit*

Joseph A. Gump, *Transfiguration Plowshares-West*

Abbie Hoffman, *activist and author*

Nicole Hollander, *cartoonist*

Jonah House: Phil Berrigan, Elizabeth McAllister, Greg Boertje, Dale Ashera-Davis, and John Held

Flo Kennedy, The Flo Kennedy Show, *Manhattan Cable TV*

Gillam Kerley, *Committee Against Registration and the Draft*

Yuri Kochiyama, *community activist*

Katya Komisaruk, *White Rose Action*

Joel Kovel

Michael I. Levine, M.D., *peace and justice activist*

Tom Lewis, *artist activist - Transfiguration Plowshares East 1987*

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Rev. Paul Louie, *United Presbyterian minister*

Dr. Denise E. Lynch and Dr. Kevin M. Lynch, *Central CT State University*

Reginald W. Major, *Dept. of Black Studies, SF State University*

James L. Marsh, *Professor of Philosophy, Fordham University*

Francisco E. "Kiko" Martinez, *attorney/COINTELPRO target*

Bill Means, *American Indian Movement*

Matt Meyers, *War Resisters League national chairman*

Middle East Crisis Committee, *New Haven*

The Rt. Reverend Paul Moore, Jr., *Bishop of NY*

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National Black United Front

No Business As Usual Action Network *(National Response Committee)*

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Daniel J. Stern, *Sociology Department, Northeastern Illinois University*

Joe Stork, MERIP *Middle East Report*

Charles H. Straut, *United Methodist Church District Superintendent*

Kurt Vonnegut, *writer*

Wabun-Inni, aka Vernon Bellecourt, *representative, American Indian Movement*

George W. Webber, *New York Theological Seminary*

Bishop Dale White, *New York area United Methodist Church*

Leonard Weinglass, *attorney*

Cornel West, *Union Theological Seminary*

Farley W. Wheelwright, *Minister Emeritus, Sepulveda Unitarian Universalist Society*

Gayraud Wilmore, *Dean, NY Theological Seminary*

Quentin Young, M.D.

58 students at the National Student Convention, Rutgers University, February 1988

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of communal strife and destructive war. Yehoshafat Harkabi, a former head of Israeli military intelligence who advocates giving up territory in a peace settlement, warned: "What awaits Jews and Palestinians if there is no solution—I will say it in very short terms—is hell!" □

THE 215,000-WORD HABIT

Should I Give My Life to *The Times*?

SEYMOUR KRIM

"There are literally a thousand reasons why missing The New York Times *each day is virtually unthinkable."*
—WQXR fifteen-second voice ad

Excuse me while I put my *New York Times* aside and try to write this piece. It's now 8:35 in the evening, absolutely no baloney, although we used to use a shorter word, and I'm still working on Section B, page 4—"For Ferraro, Lost Friendships But Stronger Family," continued from page B1. I've already had my supper (broiled tilefish, little potatoes, bean salad, a glass of Boucheron blanc de blanc), not my *breakfast*, and I still have twenty pages of Section B to go plus Sections C and D. Let me not wring out the page count here—the real situation is monstrous enough—actually, the upcoming eighteen pages of Section B are nonreading materials, only classifieds. But what with hard news, features and reviews, tonight I still have forty-three pages to mow down before tomorrow begins in three hours and fifteen minutes and the same torment awaits me!

What's happened? What's going on? Was *The Times* always like this except we didn't notice—of course not, even I know that, but when did it start becoming pointedly pathological as a daily read? When did it really start getting out of hand for all but the professional human mice who spend their days in the stacks nibbling away at print? There's no exact telling when it passed over the line, but obviously it first began during the tenure of A.M. (Abe) Rosenthal as executive editor, 1977-86. Rosenthal himself has said that he picked up new journalistic finger foods from that preppy innovator Clay Felker, when Clay was at the helm of *New York* magazine during the 1970s—before Mad Dog Rupert ate little Clay up and spat him out for jaw-strengthening exercises.

But what did Rosenthal pick up that has now made *The Times* into such a Frankenstein of unrestrained virtues, or did it turn into a noble glandular case for other reasons also? What we know is this: Rosenthal took from Felker all the magazine-type concepts he could newspaperize—things that Mr. Prep had originated as consumer service features, like The Passionate Shopper, The Underground Gourmet, Best Bets, How the Power Game Is Played, etc.—and fleshed out (why? why?) what was already a portly paper. The answer to the mystifying question posed just now flashes in: yuppie readability, entertainment. If you're in print, why should the mags have it all in the Age of Plush and newspapers continue to trod the same old grim rut of who, what, when, where—how square! At the same time old shrewdie Abe was adding ice-cream colors to his paper's sober garb, that garb itself was also draping an increasingly voracious global waistline, until the weekday *Times* now averages around 215,000 words of hard copy, and Sunday's close to a million.

Two hundred and fifteen thousand words is what you're trying to grapple with every day; so am I, buddy, and it makes me want to cry at the torment that publisher Punch Sulzberger is inflicting on us. Could it be that Punch is one of those legendary "Jews without mercy," as some hard-liners of that beleaguered faith have been called? Is it necessary that a human newspaper be this size? But while you ponder that, keep in mind what an obsession, what a massive hanging goiter, the very thought of this great paper has become in the minds of its cringing readers. Just as I have my own forty-three unread pages of today's *Times* in escrow until I can gut out a first draft of this article—don't worry, I'll redeem those pages if it kills me before I permit my eyes to close tonight—so there must be untold thousands throughout this city (country?) who are fiercely trying to finish up before the new day arrives with its new 215,000-word responsibilities.

Few regular readers have the chutzpah to snub the paper entirely for a day, never doubting they will be punished in some mysterious way, yet few can get through it without psychic confusions about what to skip, whether to read on (onward!) at the expense of earning a living, vacuuming the rug, writing a letter to the phone company, etc. I kid you not, it's become a weird confrontation for many people, this *New York Times*, all of its sheer mass comprising nothing less than an alternate reality—but too fearfully much for people who don't want to devote their lives to it, as James Joyce asked his readers to do with his books.

Not only does *The Times* stagger its own readers with the enormous weight of humanity dumped on them every morning; things have reached the point where it has become America's number-one commissar of the real. If it doesn't appear in *The Times*, such is the unconscious reflex of the faithful, it isn't worthy of existence. To the extent that now it even reports on itself as a necessary source in the making of news. For example:

The day after I started flinging my own frail frame against this graven idol—the day that occurred three hours and fifteen minutes after the raw beginnings of this piece, a while back—the chesty confidence that holds power in place was exercised in full view without a hint of shame. Reporter Herbert Mitgang, doing a story on a new one-volume encyclopedia called *Chronicle of the 20th Century*, interviewed its editor in chief for no particular reason except that he had once been a managing editor of *The Times*. His name is

Seymour Krim is a former addict of The New York Times, *who suffers occasional relapses.*

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Clifton Daniel and he is, incidentally, married to Harry Truman's daughter, so why not chuck him and his new brainchild a P.R. bone?

Fine, but then in the very same issue reporter Mitgang was himself interviewed by yet another *Times* reporter, Edwin McDowell, for writing a *New Yorker* magazine article (see how the old-boy network widens!) about American novelists who have been harassed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Reporter McDowell tells us the article was inspired by a book that Mitgang has put together called *Dangerous Dossiers: Exposing the Secret War Against America's Greatest Authors.* Did that end it? Not on your life. William H. Honan, until recently cultural editor of the newspaper, was then quoted by reporter McDowell as saying, ominously, "The New York Times was not aware of the article or book until today."

Ah, *The New York Times*! It quotes itself, it interviews itself, it sometimes seems to get confused with the world itself, which is reflected in the knit brows of the earnest—especially that flock of briefcase-carrying young women one sees on lower Manhattan buses, wrestling with the four windmill sections of you know what, too overpowered by duty to put the whole thing down for a minute and look out the window. But you just can't do that, it's like masturbation used to be for the current senior-citizen generation—God is watching.

I wouldn't dare say that *The Times* isn't the most incredible 30-cent buy in New York (a Snickers bar would have to come down 20 cents even to get in the running), but do dare say that it is at a perilous subjective cost. One can easily imagine actual madness and suicide resulting from an impossible attempt to read all of this newspaper every day, and I wouldn't be surprised if some CUNY social psychologist isn't already working on a grant proposal. If reality in our time has gotten out of hand—the new science of disorder, Chaos, can serve as a clue, correct?—then the newspaper has followed suit; but like the old naturalistic novel it has resorted to accretion of detail to keep up, rather than initiating a counterinsurgency against the flood.

There is a crisis at *The New York Times*, nor should my saying this make you guffaw when you look at the profit statement. If a reader feels that only by brilliant eye-editing (quick hop/skip here, forget this one, now should I plunge?) can he reach the last page without putting a sixty-foot trench in the middle of his day, something is gravely out of whack. Would it take a nuclear wipe-out to make *The Times* start all over again, lithe and quick? Is it crazily advisable to get even bigger and more impossible, an intimidatingly honored but unread monument, like William Gaddis's *J R* (National Book Award, 1976), totally cowing the reader with its vision of absolute coverage? Or is it obvious, as I concede it is, that this indefatigable machine of money, talent and heedless pride will continue on its way even when its desperate readers are cudgeling their brains, looking for a formula to cope? Even as a new day hints at its arrival in the predawn Eastern skies with Sections C and D of yesterday still barely skimmed? Is there to be no end to it, seriously, even unto eternity and beyond? □

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Israel

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

scrabble Jerusalem stone buildings shut up with maroon steel-plate doors. A few young men (but no women) milled around on the sidewalks. The most striking change was the graffiti, which were spray-painted everywhere, even on the courtyard walls of Shu'fat's most elegant houses.

"At night there is border patrol every 200 meters." Avi passed an intersection. "There was an Arab women shot and killed here two weeks ago, and a riot. She just happened to be standing in the wrong place, but the soldiers then had to move in." He looked at me blankly, caught between disapproval and apprehension. His son is nearly 15, three years away from conscription. His wife speaks of returning to her native Argentina. A police van stood at the intersection where the woman was killed; an army truck was parked less conspicuously, about fifty meters beyond.

When we finally reached our destination there was a different sort of drama. I've come to see it as more revealing of Israel's grim crisis, the Jewish state's crisis, than the drive over had been. We pulled up to a concrete slab building and Avi honked the horn. A genial Arab youth named Hana opened the door, and we drove into a damp, grimy space, half garage, half kitchen. Another Arab youth was sleeping out back on a soiled striped sofa. We walked around and Avi was suddenly in distress. "Why did you let the fire go out?" he chastised Hana, like an older brother who's discovered the evidence of mischief just when parents are expected home. He ran over to the wall and methodically lit an oversized gas pilot at the end of a long rubber hose.

It turns out that the *mashgiach*—the supervisor appointed by the rabbinate to certify the food as kosher—had warned Avi about his Arab cook, an older man who's worked with Avi for ten years. Avi explained, "Jewish law requires that if a non-Jew does the cooking the stove must be lit by a Jew." Avi's main clients are government agencies, which serve only kosher food. Since kashrut certification is legally up to the rabbinate, Avi had lit the gas. He is an atheist, but his state identity card reads "Yehudi," which is good enough for the *mashgiach*. "The rabbinate charges me 1,000 shekels [$625] a month for 'supervision.'"

The preoccupations of the Orthodox rabbinate struck us as sadly amusing. A couple of months before, he told me, Jerusalem Arab workers at an Israeli food-processing factory had been caught pissing into huge vats of hummus they were preparing for the restaurant trade. On the ride back to West Jerusalem, Hana rode with us and we asked him to translate the slogans spray-painted on the walls: "Yes, to the Palestine Army!" "Fatah, Fatah!" There were also slogans by supporters of the Moslem fundamentalists, he said, but he couldn't find the Hebrew words for them. I wondered if he was being tactful. I wondered what Hana thought of that kosher flame. I wondered most about what that sleepy youth had been doing during the night.

Seventy percent of Palestinian residents of Gaza are under age 24, and about 60 percent of West Bankers are. It is precisely because of youths like Hana that many Israelis are re-examining their attitude toward the occupation. Since Moshe Dayan's time most Israelis, really, have thought of the occupation as an obvious gain for Israeli defense—"security borders," Dayan called them. Since December young Palestinians have imposed a kind of partition of their own on the land. The road to Judea goes through Bethlehem, the road to Samaria through Shu'fat.

Ehud Olmert, a Likud member of the Knesset close to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, told me that Israel should now accord the Palestinians autonomy unilaterally, even if this cannot be negotiated with the local inhabitants—an impractical suggestion, perhaps, and reminiscent of former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon's frustrated effort to set up collaborationist "village leagues" in 1981. Still, it was revealing of his defensiveness. "American Jews failed us," Olmert said. "We held the land for twenty years and they didn't come."

And yet the peace camp would be wrong to find in Olmert's disquietude anything that is much reassuring. While many Likud supporters are openly disappointed in the occupation, only about half of Israelis surveyed favor the Shultz plan, and that most callous of hard-liners, Ariel Sharon, is getting stronger within the Likud, not weaker. Polls taken since the uprising started last December show the ultranationalist Tehiya Party winning eight to ten Knesset seats in the next elections and Rabbi Meir Kahane's Kach Party as many as four.

Why has the collapse of hawkish security arguments about the occupation not led to a corresponding surge in public enthusiasm for Labor and "territorial compromise"? Israel's claim of sovereignty over a united Jerusalem—over the mosques, the Arab quarter, the Jerusalem of gold depicted in the El Al posters—is becoming an abstraction. If young Palestinians are going to impose de facto partition of the land, why not try to negotiate a more peaceful de jure partition, one which satisfies the Palestinian hunger for self-determination but incorporates new and formal guarantees for Israeli security?

The simple answer is that Jews and Arabs loathe each other. After fifty years of war, defeat of the enemy has become for Israelis and Palestinians alike something more compelling than the pristine nationalist strivings that got the conflict going in the first place. Right-wing leaders appear more at ease with naked violence than their rivals. There is also persistent suspicion among the less well-educated Israelis that peace intellectuals are blindly idealistic about the human race, that they are *yefai nefesh*, or "pretty souls," the equivalent of bleeding-heart liberals.

This kind of charge always has some truth to it. "Peace Now people go to Gaza," Meron Benvenisti told me; "They see the squalor and report it to the press. But they disregard the hatred, the explicit Palestinian intention to 'return' to

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Bernard Avishai is associate editor of Harvard Business Review *and the author of* The Tragedy of Zionism: Revolution and Democracy in the Land of Israel *(Farrar, Straus & Giroux).*

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their homes. Does any Arab youth talk about what Labor means by territorial compromise? Does anyone in Gaza even mention Jordan? And do Peace Now people acknowledge the racism that has emerged among the soldiers? How ironic, this hatred! It turns out that your victim is even more hateful to you than your oppressors!" He let it sink in. Power was teaching Jews unexpected lessons.

Benvenisti picked up *Ha'aretz* and noticed a Peace Now advertisement, a call to a demonstration. Read it, he commanded; I stumbled, he snatched it away. "Look at this Hebrew: you can't read it because it's goddamned poetry!" His voice was thundering. "Who can understand this? How many young people go to the Hebrew University? Are Likud advertisements like this?"

Still, there is more to the failure of the peace camp than Arab stones and poetic ads. And here we get back to the heart of the crisis. Greater Israel may not be possible as the Israeli right has envisioned it. But the response of Israeli Arabs to the uprising has raised some unsettling questions about "smaller" Israel—questions the Israeli left, especially the leaders of the Labor Party, have tended to disregard.

Israeli Jews have often said that they do not intend to return to the borders of the pre-1967 state. Israeli Arabs, in their support for the Palestinian uprising, have shown their unwillingness to return to the pre-1967 state of affairs—whatever the borders—back to an Israel that was the product of revolutionary Zionism. After 1967, after all, the dominant rejoinder of the Labor Party's left to Dayan's argument about "security borders" was not an argument in favor of reciprocal Palestinian and Israeli national rights. Rather, it was Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir's assertion of a danger to a Jewish majority in *Eretz Yisrael*. Sapir, who died in 1975, pointed out that the Arab birth rate, including that of Israeli Arabs, was much higher than the Jewish one. If the territories were not returned, he said, Israelis would soon be living in a country whose "Jewish character" was lost.

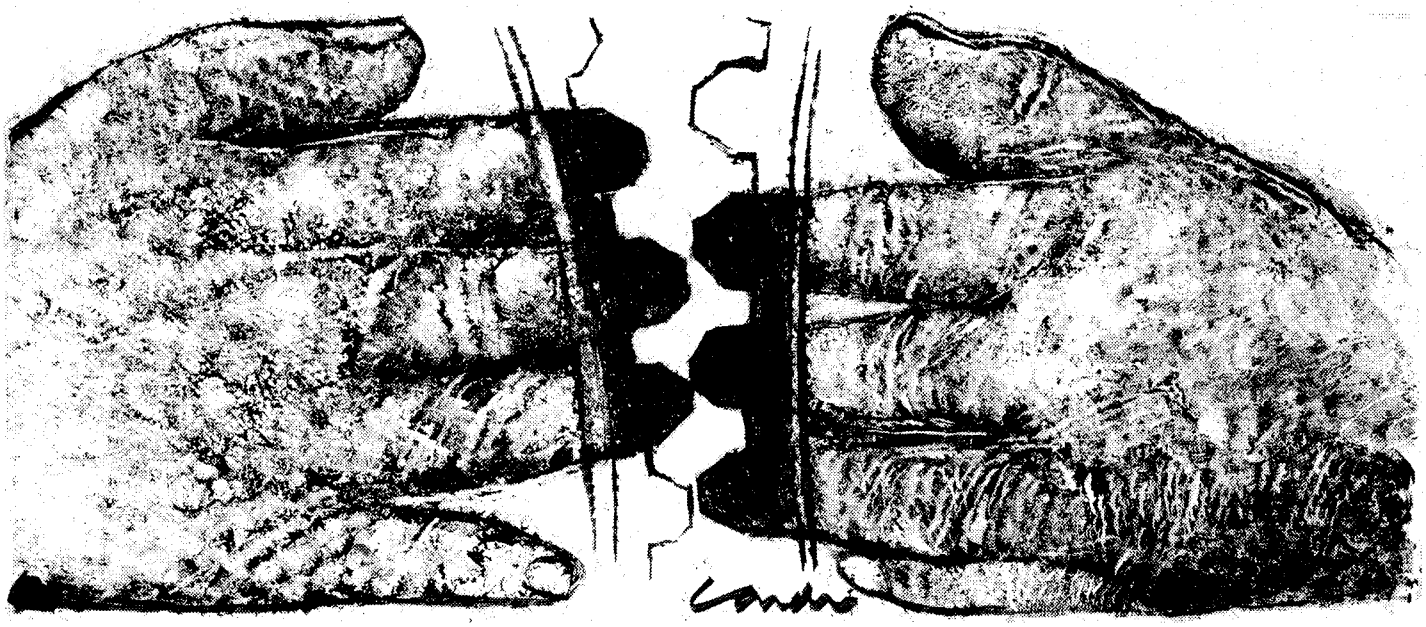
Presumably, if Jews were in the majority, they would continue to have the historic right to turn the country into something Jewish. What if the Arabs were the majority? Would not protections for Jewish national rights be rescinded?

Political scientists close to Labor developed the argument further, taking Sapir's essentially cultural fears and putting them into the context of Israeli electoral politics. Shlomo Avineri, professor of political science at Hebrew University—who, like Olmert, has chastised American Jews for not being Zionists in action—insisted that if the occupation continued, Israelis would be forced to choose between living in a Jewish state or a democratic one. He wrote that an emerging Arab majority might well mean a majority for P.L.O. leader Yasir Arafat in the Knesset. That demographic argument has been reinforced in recent months by the work of Haifa University geographer Arnon Sofer, who found that in 1985 there were 365,000 Jewish children under 4 years of age living in Greater Israel, and 370,000 Arab children.

Of course, all this begs the question of just what Avineri, Sofer and others actually mean by "Jewish character" when they speak of the Jewish state. There are problems with the term "majority" too. Israeli Jews are not a single block of people. They are themselves split into dozens of approaches to Jewish theology and history, modern intellectual styles, cultural and ethnic camps. In any case, if the trip to my friend's catering business did not bring home to me how confusing all of these terms have become since 1967, then another visit did.

While I was in Israel, a cousin of mine in Haifa—a man strongly in favor of territorial compromise—invited Professor Sofer to his house to speak before forty guests, some with annexationist views and some, like him, in favor of partition. Sofer made a forceful presentation of the demographic facts. My cousin was astounded to discover that people who were opposed to territorial compromise before his talk were even more opposed to it when Sofer had finished.

This was not perverse stubbornness on their part. A majority of Israelis see and dread something that people on the left—those who think of the Jewish state merely as a state with a Jewish majority—often overlook. What, in practical terms, does living in the Jewish state mean? How does the



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demographic argument play in the Israeli Arab community?

No Israeli nervous about demography—not Sapir, not Sofer, not even Avineri—ever seriously considered giving the Palestinians of the occupied territories the right to vote. Therefore, the growth of the population of West Bankers or residents of Gaza never really threatened to change the Hebrew atmosphere of Israel or the electoral balance of the Knesset, whatever the impact of the occupation on democratic values.

In contrast, many of the institutions and ideological principles supported by the Jewish state are deeply vulnerable to the claims of the 750,000 Arabs who are citizens of Israel. These people have demanded serious changes in the legal and bureaucratic structure of the state, changes having little to do with demographics. The Palestinian uprising has swelled the desire of Israeli Arabs for full, meaningful civil equality—in Hebrew, if necessary—and they see no reason why the state should fail to grant this equality simply because they constitute 17 percent of the population and not 51 percent. At the same time, there are perhaps 100,000 Arabs from the occupied territories working in Israel mainly in low-level jobs in construction and tourism, many of whom want to be treated as permanent residents.

What changes? Though Israeli Arabs vote, Israel is legally held to be the state of "the Jewish people," not merely of its citizens. Traditional Jewish law is used to determine citizenship rights under the Law of Return: A Jew is anyone born of a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism by a rabbi. The Orthodox rabbinate has established jurisdiction in supervising marriage, divorce, aspects of child custody, burial—and food catering. Entrenched privileges have been accorded the Orthodox rabbinate and leaders of state-supported Orthodox educational institutions. Incidentally, a philosophical friend told me that there are now as many yeshiva students in Israel (partly supported by the state) as there were in Poland before World War II, some 30,000.

Old Zionist development institutions, which were not retired after the state was founded, still bestow economic rights on individual Jews—people whose nationality is legally designated as Jewish on state identity cards. The old Zionist land development corporations, Keren Hayesod and Keren Kayemet, are in effect organs of the state land authority; the Jewish Agency is an organ of the Ministry of Immigration when it comes to disbursement of loans to new immigrants and settlements. So have the public corporations, agricultural settlements and welfare agencies of the Histadrut labor federation remained national Jewish institutions.

Israeli Arabs, the Druse excepted, do not serve in the army, as if military loyalty presupposes loyalty to the Jewish people and not to the democratic state of Israel. Israel has no integrated system of public education, no civil marriage, no Bill of Rights to protect non-Jews against discrimination in housing or employment and, indeed, no protections for secular Jews against the encroachments of Orthodox politicians.

Israeli Arabs will thus never settle for an unreformed Israel, which is precisely what Labor intellectuals have promised to get back to. The Labor Party is identified with the proposition that partition will rescue the Jewish state from fundamental Arab challenges. But it is now clear that even in the context of a peace process, even if a Palestinian state was to be established, there could be no return to the "Days of Binyamina" (as Chava Alberstein's nostalgic song evoked the years between 1948 and 1967): no return to the years when the principles, battle cries and costumes of the Zionist movement engendered a revolutionary Jewish national life.

To be sure, that was a stirring time for any Jew, a time of unfamiliar, heady patriotism, of pride in the harvest, the biblical land, the people's army. But the Israeli state apparatus created during these years was afflicted by compromises with rabbinic theocrats, by constitutional stopgaps, privileges for a labor aristocracy, separate administration of Arab villages—the seeds of the current inequalities. Meir Kahane has understood, evil genius that he is, that the demographic problem of *this* state can be solved most logically by expelling all Arabs. In Kahane's view—God knows how many Israelis now share it—such expulsions would only pick up where the 1948 war left off.

When the Palestinian disturbances started last December, Israelis were stunned. But they were more deeply alarmed by the general strike Israeli Arabs carried out late that month to show sympathy for the uprising. Then came another shock, in January, when Labor's most important Arab member of the Knesset, Abdulwahab Darawshe, left the party to form a new party, led by Israeli Arabs, committed (so his young cousin and political strategist Mohammed Darawshe told me) to a Palestinian state on the one hand and complete civil equality for Israeli Arabs on the other. It is worth noting in this context that the Land Day demonstrations that convulsed the occupied territories during the last week of March were to commemorate a bloody confrontation in 1976 between the Israeli Defense Force and Israeli Arabs in the Galilee, not West Bankers.

For most Israelis, now, the Palestinian uprising means a kind of return to 1947, a struggle over the very existence of a state derived from revolutionary Zionism. Ari Shavit wrote in the February 24 issue of the weekly *Koteret Rashit*, "The slogan-warning of the Israeli right, 'Today Shechem [Nablus], Tomorrow Jaffa,' is not less ominous because it is used by demagogues. One should not conclude from it that we should stay in the occupied territories. But we must be careful that our withdrawal does not produce a domino effect." That is a sentiment approved of in the Israeli heartland.

I visited a friend on Kfar Yehoshua (a cooperative farm in the Jezreel Valley), a *moshavnik* and a Labor supporter literally from birth. "I would be for a Palestinian state today," he told me earnestly, "but that will not be the end of it. The Palestinians are a majority north of Safed, in the upper Galilee. They are a majority down the road, in the Little Triangle. Why won't *they* want a state?"

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Because, I responded as best I could, Israel will not relinquish the territory, and the Israeli Arabs know it is strong enough not to. Besides, they are not demanding national rights for themselves. The creation of a Palestinian state will probably mitigate their national or separatist impulses. They could then enjoy Israeli citizenship and enjoy Palestinian nationalism vicariously. They are modern in Hebrew; they like the political and sexual freedom of Israeli civil life.

"What do you mean, 'citizens of Israel'?" he asked skeptically. "I know many Arabs: They are building contractors and farmers—we get along. But they'll never want to be citizens of a Jewish state! They'll never sing 'Hatikvah' [the Zionist anthem], they'll always be unhappy. We'll start with a Palestinian state, and then the Arabs here will want to go to the army, and they'll want Israel to be like any other state, a multinational state, like America. Then what will it have all been for?"

Some of this fear, I would still maintain, is the result of not having thought things through. If Kfar Yehoshua is any evidence, then the Zionist movement's great achievement was precisely to lay the foundation for a secular, Hebrew democracy, not a "Jewish state." The Hebrew language predominates in historic Palestine. Even young Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have, for economic reasons, been forced to acquire its rudiments.

Nor would Israel be much changed in the everyday sense if it were to become the more complete secular democracy—like "America"—that Israeli Arabs and a growing but small minority of Israeli Jews want. The Israeli Arab intelligentsia will still be drawn more to Hebrew literary culture than to the village. If you want to see how Israel is not a democracy, look at the way Arab writers live; if you want to see how it is, listen to the way they speak.

Israel at forty is hardly a revolutionary Zionist society. If Israelis were to acknowledge the post-Zionist Israel in which they live, Tel Aviv would still be steamy, the Hebrew University would offer the same courses, the lyrics of Matti Caspi's songs would still reveal a wry Yiddish wit, the Moroccan Jews would still celebrate the festival of Mamuna. Most Israeli Jews, including the largely middle-class, Sephardic supporters of the Likud, are hardly religious fanatics and would find themselves quite at home in a country where civil marriages were permitted and in which the buses—not just the soccer players—ran on the Sabbath.

Besides, the tremendous growth of the Israeli Arab population in the upper Galilee only underscores how foolish the Israeli state has been to squander its resources on populating the West Bank. The settlements are no security asset; Defense Minister Rabin has openly criticized the citizenry for making the army's job more difficult.

Nevertheless, even if the transformation of Israel from a Jewish state to a Hebrew republic would not prove so very traumatic, Israelis are not open to making changes just now. People are living from day to night. Most active Israeli politicians are in their 60s. They are mainly veterans of the army during David Ben-Gurion's era, or third-level leaders and bureaucrats of old Zionist parties. They are nationalists. The hardest-boiled Zionists, even in Labor, think of liberalism as Sapir did, as a return to the delusions of the German bourgeoisie or to the frustrated romanticism of prewar Poland.

Even for many of Israel's peace intellectuals, liberalism has never been fundamental to Zionism but has rather seemed a kind of cherished, imported luxury, a competing "theology"—or even worse, a concession to historic forces opposing Zionist socialism and nationalism, a dropping of the guard. Young Israeli Jews cannot tell you why Chaim Weizmann is remembered, but they have absorbed old Zionist principles in the form of forceful clichés about the nobility of Jewish settlement, the chronic betrayals of the gentile world, historic Jewish rights to the land of Israel.

In spite of their admiration for America, few young Israelis think of liberal institutions and civil rights as nonviolent routes to settle disputes that would otherwise be intractable. In consequence of the occupation, most of them (and young Palestinians for that matter) have come to see Arabs as a dominated class, power as something that speaks from the barrel of a gun. Today, 60 percent of Israeli Jewish youth would reduce, not enhance, the rights of Israel's Arabs. Israeli soldiers and Palestinian rock-throwers are routinely in the grip of an atavism that outpaces political science.

As for my friend on Kfar Yehoshua, a serious, compassionate, utterly charming man: He has as much difficulty envisioning a pluralist Israel as white residents of Little Rock, Arkansas, had envisioning the New South in 1958. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Mementos Mori

JEAN FRANCO

LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA. *By Gabriel García Márquez. Translated by Edith Grossman. Alfred A. Knopf. 348 pp. $18.95.*

In 1948, as a young journalist in Barranquilla, Gabriel García Márquez amused his readers by comparing love to a liver disease that could lead to the fatal complication of suicide. Four decades later, he recognizes that it is love that keeps readers turning the pages. That is why, despite its apocalyptic undertones, *Love in the Time of Cholera* has already sold over a million copies in Europe and Latin America.

Set in a stagnant tropical port at the turn of the century, *Love in the Time of Cholera* tells the story of Florentino Ariza's prolonged passion for Fermina Daza, a passion that is finally consummated after fifty years, nine months and four days, when they are both over 70 years old. The consummation takes place on a riverboat that flies the cholera flag in order to protect their privacy. When Fermina undresses, Florentino finds her "just as he imagined her. Her shoulders were wrinkled, her breasts sagged, her ribs were covered by a flabby skin as pale and cold as a frog's"—which does not prevent him from exploring "her withered neck with his fingertips, her bosom armored in metal stays, her hips with their decaying bones, her thighs with their aging veins." The boat cannot land because of the cholera flag, so the couple, enjoying "the tranquil, wholesome love of experienced grandparents," are destined to live out their lives perpetually journeying up and down the river through a calamitous and ruined landscape, clinging hopefully to the last vestiges of life.

The humor of this autumnal romance cannot, however, dispel the odor of mortality. On the very first page, the reader is greeted "with the aromatic fumes of gold cyanide" and the suicide of the Caribbean refugee Jeremiah de Saint-Amour. The doctor who writes the death certificate is Fermina Daza's 81-year-old husband, Juvenal Urbino, who hours later is killed falling from a ladder as he tries to coax a parrot from a tree. It is at the funeral that Florentino renews a courtship he had begun half a century earlier.

The novel retraces the story of their love and separation: Fermina's adolescence under the jealous guardianship of a father who had made his money in contraband and wanted her to be a great lady; her brief engagement to the illegitimate and lowly Florentino; her marriage to the brilliant European-educated doctor Juvenal Urbino; and her then exemplary life (marred only by a two-year separation caused by her husband's infidelity). Meanwhile, Florentino has a brilliant career with the riverboat company and becomes an impenitent and bizarre womanizer who, when he is over 60, is capable of assaulting a maid "in less time than a Philippino rooster" and leaving her in the family way. His lovers include a 50-year-old widow who receives him stark naked with an organdy bow in her hair, an escapee from the lunatic asylum and, when he is over 70, a schoolgirl "with braces on her teeth and the scrapes of elementary school on her knees."

The humor and pathos of aging and death are subjects that have obsessed García Márquez from his earliest writings. His first novel, *Leafstorm*, was about a funeral. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, there are dozens of tiny vignettes of death—Amaranta Úrsula preparing her own shroud, José Arcadio Buendía's dying dream of walking through room after room until he meets the man he has killed, and the matriarch, Úrsula, concealing her blindness from her children before lucidly dying. In *Love in the Time of Cholera* bodies fail long before passions are spent. Florentino goes bald when he is still young. He suffers from blennorrhea, a swollen lymph gland, four warts and six cases of impetigo in the groin. When Dr. Urbino begins to lapse into senility, Fermina "helped him to dress: she sprinkled talcum powder between his legs, she smoothed cocoa butter on his rashes, she helped him put on his undershorts with as much love as if they had been a diaper, and continued dressing him item by item, from his socks to the knot in his tie with the topaz pin." On their riverboat idyll, she helped Florentino "to take his enemas, she got up before he did to brush the false teeth he kept in a glass while he slept and she solved the problem of her misplaced spectacles, for she could use his for reading and mending." Both of them, by this time, have the "sour smell of old age."

Decay is part of the landscape. The colonial Caribbean port where Fermina and Florentino pass most of their lives is familiar García Márquez territory. It was in towns such as this that he wrote his first sketches for a novel in the late 1940s and which he chronicled as a journalist in Barranquilla and Cartagena. It was here that he collected the repertoire of legend, anecdote, small-town boredom and eccentricity that he has drawn on ever since. Not that there is any nostalgia in *Love in the Time of Cholera*, which moves from the stagnation of colonialism to the devastation of modernity in the time it takes to turn a page. Although the cobbled streets of the city recall "surprise attacks and buccaneer landings," "nothing had happened for four centuries except a slow aging among withered laurels and putrefying swamps." On the edge of the town are the old slave quarters, where buzzards fight over the offal from the slaughterhouse. Cadavers are everywhere, some dead of cholera and others in the wars. Returning from his studies in Paris, Dr. Urbino sails into a bay "through a floating blanket of drowned animals." "The ocean looked like ashes, the old palaces of the marquises were about to succumb to a proliferation of beggars, and it was impossible to discern the ardent scent of jasmine behind the vapors of death from the open sewers." On a trip that Florentino takes upriver in an effort to forget Fermina, he sees "three bloated, green human corpses float past, with buzzards sitting on them"; when Fermina and Juvenal Urbino take a balloon ride to celebrate the year 1900, they look down on banana plantations strewn with the bodies of workers who have been summarily executed.

By the end of the novel and its "happy ending," the mood is paradoxically apocalyptic. Fermina and Florentino's love boat, which once had steamed through an idyllic landscape, now passes "calcinated flatlands stripped of entire forests." The manatees "with their great breasts that had nursed their young and wept on the banks in a forlorn woman's voice were an extinct species, annihilated by the armored bullets of hunters for sport." Natural life has almost disappeared, "the parrots, the monkeys, the villages were gone, everything was gone."

Jean Franco is a professor of Spanish and Portuguese at Columbia University.

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For this is the irony of García Márquez's novel—that the genial good humor disguises apocalyptic foreboding. The same civilization that idealizes lovers produces a global wasteland, and the private fantasies of romance are rafts on a sea of public devastation. Fermina and Florentino salvage their own idyll but are themselves part of the destruction, a last nineteenth-century romance that can only find a heart of darkness (not for nothing is Joseph Conrad a character in the novel; he is accused of cheating Fermina Daza's father in a shady arms deal). Fermina and Florentino's love boat, indeed, adds to the devastation, since it has polluted the river waters and consumes the last of the forests on the riverbanks. It is this ambiguous relationship of private felicity and mass destruction that provides the novel with its disturbing undertow.

In his novels, García Márquez constantly returns to one particular historical period—from independence to the first decades of the twentieth century. It is the hundred years of Macondo in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and of the dictatorship in *The Autumn of the Patriarch*. What fascinates him, evidently, is the meeting of fierce Latin idiosyncrasy with rationalism and modernity. Yet *Love in the Time of Cholera* is not only about the past but also about the anachronistic life forms that still survive in the ruins left by nineteenth-century progress. In this respect, the novel shares the *fin de siècle* mood of much contemporary Latin American writing. □

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Prior Restraints

JOHN A. WILLIAMS

In *The Media Monopoly* Ben Bagdikian notes that "in 1981 there were forty-six corporations that controlled most of the business in daily newspapers, magazines, television, books and motion pictures. Five years later the number had shrunk to twenty-nine." It is now 1988 and the shrinkage continues. In 1965 my editor at Little, Brown & Company, the late Harry Sions, told me that Time Inc.'s intended purchase of the company would make no difference in the quality of books Little, Brown produced. I didn't believe him, but I stayed with the house for a while anyway. We all know now that such takeovers have been bad news for writers. For one thing, they increase the importance of the dollar sign—always a mark of the censors.

But another element of censorship has emerged with the severe contractions of the publishing industry, and it is one black and other minority writers (and some white writers) have grumbled about for years. A dozen years ago I said in an interview, "PEN is so concerned with foreign authors and their plight, but how about the plight of black authors here?" The quote appeared in the June 7, 1976, edition of *Publishers Weekly*. The then secretary of PEN called me to say that PEN could not be responsible for "faddishness" in publishing. The possibility that a genteel sort of censorship lay hidden in the folds of a concern about "faddishness" did not occur to him—as it has not occurred to others. I saw no reason to pursue the issue, as I knew he did not believe one existed. The case has been made more legitimate, I think, by Irving Louis Horowitz's article "Monopolization of Publishing and Crisis in Higher Education" (*Academe*, November/December 1987). Horowitz has suggested that "the new monopolization has a direct bearing on the ability of publishing to satisfy a fundamental constitutional guarantee: free speech." He continues, "A free speech environment is more subtly eroded by different notions of appropriate profit goals that obtain in large and small firms."

Even before the domestic conglomerates took them over, publishing houses had become reluctant to accept works by black authors, so we cannot realistically expect the foreign conglomerates to do any better. Quite possibly they will do worse, and the erosion of a free speech environment will continue.

Twenty years ago there were several black editors in publishing houses. (That they are no longer in place may indicate that publishers do not feel them capable of editing books written by white writers.) True, they were mainly advisers to the major decision-makers, but they were there, and as a result there was some enthusiasm for the publication of black writers. That time is past, and I do not see it returning in my lifetime. I am not happy to have to write this, but the facts do tend to speak for themselves.

During that same brief period, newspapers and magazines also hired minorities, but staffing to achieve a quota did not mean bigotry had died. Fifteen years ago, for example, *The New York Times* and The Associated Press were sued by minorities and women. Both settled out of court. More recently, last year, the New York *Daily News*, unwise enough to go to court in the face of ample evidence of discrimination against blacks, lost a suit to four black journalists who had charged it with discrimination. There is, of course, a clear, indisputable relationship between the media and the publishing industry.

It must be noticed, if rarely mentioned, that black reviewers and critics are seldom asked to comment on works by white authors in the major review media. This, too, is censorship. PEN has a "Freedom-to-Write" committee. No one, however, actually bars an author's freedom to write; it is the freedom to publish, to be heard or read, that is at stake in both democratic and totalitarian states; it is the freedom to be judged on literary, and not only on racial or political, grounds. The problem here, though, is that the term "literary" can be used to exclude, especially by people who approach a work with a particular kind of historical, political and racial baggage but deny to others the right to bear the same freight. No doubt, this has always been true. No doubt, those who control this system still believe that minority writers either know nothing about it or else are fearful of what they

John A. Williams is the author of several novels, including Jacob's Ladder, !Click Song *and* The Man Who Cried I Am.

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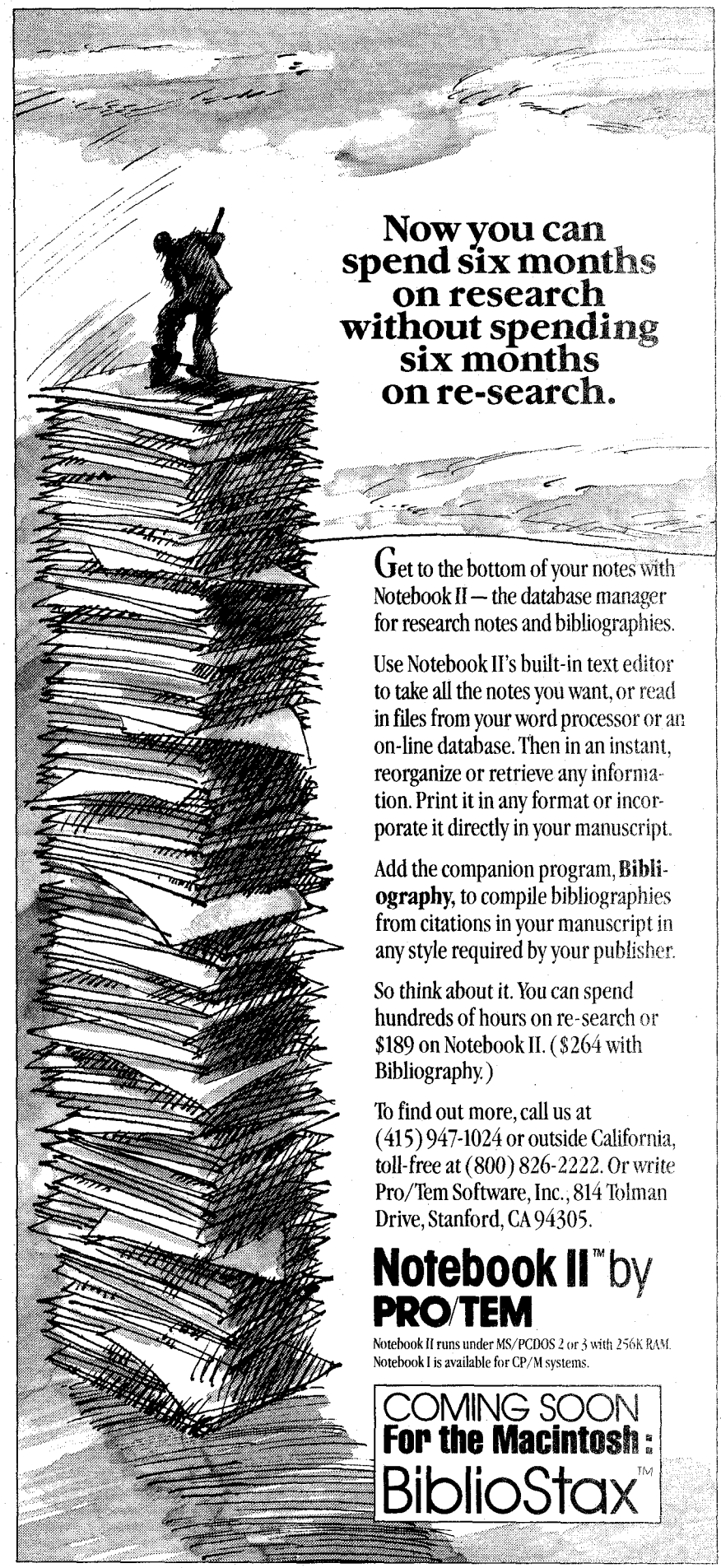
do know and of the way that knowledge must reflect upon the controllers.

In *How We Live* (1968) Penney C. and L. Rust Hills inadvertently revealed a contradiction concerning black writers that is still prevalent in publishing and in the media. They wrote: "It is not that Negroes are not writing or being published; but aside from Ellison and Baldwin, they have not yet produced the kind of writing that satisfies the complex contemporary literary tastes and sensibilities." In the book's appendix, however, they note: "The way students are now taught to read literature in our colleges and universities obscures from them what literature can tell us about ourselves and the way we live."

The clause "satisfies the complex contemporary literary tastes and sensibilities" expresses a curiously incomplete thought. No doubt to have added "of white readers" would have been too obvious a declaration, too clearly a suggestion of literary prior restraint, first cousin to censorship. The contradiction emerges again in the complaint that the way students are taught "obscures from them what literature can tell us about ourselves." Since most black writers never make it into the textbooks that are used in colleges and universities, what white (and minority) students can learn about American life is limited.

The kind of censorship present in the publishing industry could not exist without the support of critics, reviewers and academics. Addison Gayle Jr. characterizes academics as being in "control of the nation's cultural apparatus." They work together with "critics who, more often than not, peer out upon American society with a condescension usually reserved for idiots and half-wits." On the rare occasions when some academics do seek to widen the scope of literary study or when they describe its present limitations, they become anathema. *The Washington Post*'s Jonathan Yardley early this year described such efforts as being the work of "young fascists." Twenty-odd years ago the label would have been "radical" or "militant." What has happened to harden the language about what is essentially, in the case of Afro-American writers, censorship?

Actually, what we are witnessing is a hardening of attitudes about who is going to send along the word. Some of this was already present in the 1960s. Reviewing Gwendolyn Brooks's *Selected Poems* for the *New York Herald Tribune*'s *Book Week* in October 1963, Louis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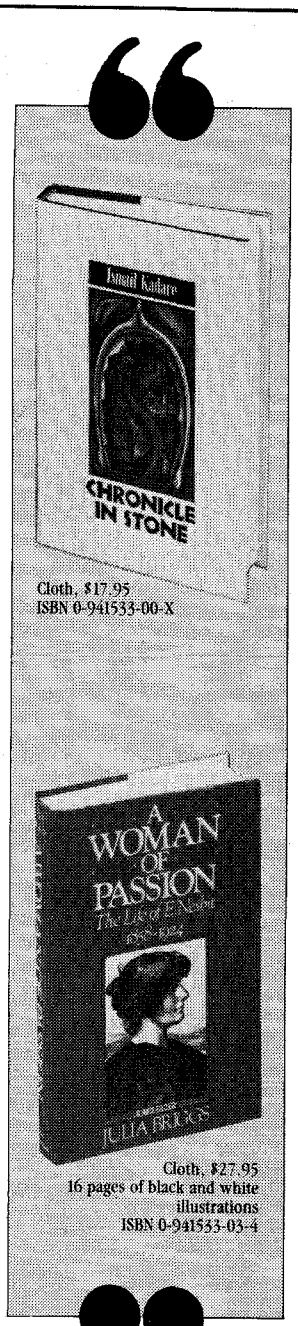
Simpson wrote, "I am not sure it is possible for a Negro to write well without making us aware that he is a Negro." He continued, "On the other hand, if being a Negro is the only subject, the writing is not important." Simpson later apologized for this statement. The fact is that almost all white writers detail white life in their works. Fair enough—that is their experience. Black critics and reviewers in the main are not permitted to comment favorably or unfavorably on such depictions, though they surely hold vigorous opinions about them. There is no lack of white reviewers and critics, however, who can easily secure platforms from which they can create the impression that most of the writing done by black authors—writing from their experience—is really not very good and therefore warrants little consideration. Literary agents, most of whom are white, buttress this attitude with the general philosophy that black writers do not produce "commercial" work, do not make money and therefore do not make suitable clients. Some white writers find themselves tagged as uncommercial, and for that reason are also de facto censored.



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—**Claire Tomalin, *Times Literary Supplement***

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Long before Simpson there was Robert Bone's *The Negro Novel in America*, in which protest was viewed as inimical to "art." The literature of protest had been an honorable endeavor for writers for over a century. In the hands of black writers, however, critics saw it as tainted. And, most recently, in *The New York Times Magazine*, Saul Bellow is credited with this statement: "Who is the Tolstoy of the Zulus? The Proust of the Papuans? I'd be glad to read them." It will be noted that both groups are black. Bellow's questions prompt one to ask if, at the core of this statement, he is saying that black people have produced no literature worthy of his time. "Every intellectual," Ignazio Silone once declared, "is a revolutionary." He was wrong, especially regarding this nation, where they seem to be growing more and more conservative.

I began this piece by discussing the effect of conglomerate takeovers on writing and on the right of free speech. I believe that censorship, intended or not, exists in publishing and affects black writers disproportionately, and that the publishing industry, in concert with the media and the academy, reinforces that second level of censorship created by profit-taking considerations. Sometimes this all comes together in the awarding of literary prizes. But the awarding of prizes cannot be separated from racist attitudes.

Recently, the names of forty-eight black writers—myself included—appeared on a statement in the press praising Toni Morrison and expressing concern that she has not received national recognition. As it was published, however, the statement was different from the one read to me over the phone. I was told it would deal, generally, with some of the concerns I've written about here. Literary awards were not mentioned. Everyone in or close to the publishing industry has heard gossip about publishing, editorial and authorial machinations at prize giving time. For example, I suppose that from now on, any mention of Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize will include reference to that letter, an inference of black literary maneuvering. Whenever "major" prizes are awarded to black writers, they tend to validate the individual but not in any way the body of Afro-American writing they cannot help but represent. That may be why James Baldwin never got a major award. Neither did Langston Hughes. Baldwin got publicity. Richard Wright and Chester Himes got very little of

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either. They all seemed to be men of the people, speakers for them. What is really under consideration here is power. Censorship is an exercise in power, however gently, however harshly it is exercised—and prizes can only be seen as accouterments of that power. At the heart of the need to display such power is the ancient conflict, always denied but deadly persistent: race and racism. □

THEATER.

MOIRA HODGSON

M. Butterfly
Oba Oba

The French always were rather strange. David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* is based on a story so preposterous it would be unbelievable were it not an actual case reported in the press in 1986. A French Foreign Service officer is convicted of espionage after a twenty-year affair with a diva from the Peking Opera. When they are arrested in Paris for passing state secrets, he not only discovers that his lover is a spy, he is astonished to learn that she is not a woman. The diva is a man in drag.

Hwang skips over the obvious question, How on earth could the diplomat not have known that his lover of twenty years was a man? Instead, he has written a play with a Theme: the conflict between the "feminine" East and the "masculine" West, the power struggle between men and women. He uses Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly* as an emblem of how Western men perceive Oriental women—and indeed, the Orient itself. "Why in Peking Opera are women's roles played by men?" asks one of the characters in the play. "Because only a man knows how a woman is supposed to act."

The play is a series of flashbacks from the cell of Rene Gallimard (played by John Lithgow), the French diplomat who has been sent to prison for treason. He is a shy fellow who calls himself the "patron saint of the socially inept" and whose slablike face is etched with the sufferings of the gangling, awkward boy with whom none of the girls wanted to dance. But when he came across some girlie magazines as an adolescent, his body "shook not with lust but with power." Gallimard believes that he can become a complete man only if he can control a shrinking butterfly of a woman, which is why he is so easily duped by the diva Song Liling (B.D. Wong).

False notes creep into the play from the start. It is written in a hearty old-fashioned American slang, as if the author were aiming to please coachloads of matinee patrons. The actors, whether they are supposed to be French or Chinese, buttonhole the audience with clichés, like a group of back-slapping traveling salesmen over a round of drinks. No effort is made to establish a hint of French colonial decadence. Hwang's Gallimard talks with a childhood friend about school popularity contests—in France?—and is given to such expressions as "Phooey on my job."

It is not hard to believe that Gallimard might be smitten when he first sees Song Liling as Madame Butterfly (despite her lamentable singing voice). But would this naïve wimp actually be capable of behaving with the premeditated cruelty of a Viscomte de Valmont until she surrendered? Early on it becomes apparent that their relationship is an inversion of that between Pinkerton and Madame Butterfly in the opera. Song Liling laughs at Gallimard's response to the work in which he has found her so moving: "What would you say if a blond homecoming queen fell in love with a short Japanese businessman? He treats her cruelly, then goes home for three years, during which time she prays to his picture and turns down marriage from a young Kennedy. Then, when she learns he has remarried, she kills herself. . . . Because it's an Oriental who kills herself for an American you find it beautiful."

Hwang never gets to the bottom of Gallimard's character. He doesn't question whether the Foreign Service officer knew that Song Liling was in fact a man ("It was dark and she was very modest"), nor does he make him into a self-deluded homosexual. But by skipping this element of the diplomat/diva relationship (in fact, making a joke of it) and moving on to the wider issues of East versus West and the origins of the Vietnam War (Gallimard is involved in the making of Western foreign policy in Vietnam), Hwang misses an important key to Gallimard's character and fails to make him convincing.

Lithgow gives an intelligent, ironic performance, but one in which energy overrides passion. Wong is no man's dream mistress. He doesn't have the eroticism, playing Song Liling as a tough little

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lotus blossom wrapped in spurious trimmings. When he finally doffs his female clothes, he unaccountably turns into a swaggering smart-ass boy who has the nerve to tell us that all along he has wanted to be loved for himself.

Under John Dexter's erratic direction, the supporting actors seem to have wandered in from another play. Rose Gregorio as Gallimard's wife and John Getz as his leering childhood friend are totally out of place. Lori Tan Chinn, who appears as a series of Chinese matrons, is nothing less than infuriating, barking orders at Song Liling as though she were the mother in a TV sitcom. Eiko Ishioka's set, however, a yin/yang swirl of red and black, divided by a white stripe that serves as a ramp, is exquisite.

With *M. Butterfly* Hwang has cottoned on to a fascinating story, but it is beyond his powers. The play has a brilliant and clever structure and is filled with fascinating ideas and insights, yet halfway through it topples over on itself. In the long run it is middlebrow Broadway entertainment—as shallow and glib as a Hollywood film script.

Oba Oba, a new Brazilian revue, doesn't even aspire to be middlebrow. There are some catchy samba tunes and even more kitschy costumes and cheerful acrobatics. But despite all the glitz, this is second-rate nightclub entertainment that wouldn't even make it in Vegas. A few belts of Brazilian *cachaça* on the rocks might help. □

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THEATER.

THOMAS M. DISCH

Humana Festival of New American Plays:
The Queen of the Leaky Roof Circuit
Alone at the Beach
Lloyd's Prayer
The Metaphor
Whereabouts Unknown
3 Pieces for a Warehouse
Julius Caesar

For half its twenty-four-season span of existence, the Actors Theater of Louisville (A.T.L.) has been home annually to the Humana Festival of New American Plays. The Humana network of private hospitals is headquartered in Louisville in Michael Graves's postmodernist landmark office tower, and the contrast between that sprightly corporate colossus and the neighboring hulks and ruins of downtown Louisville seems emblematic of a postmodern social ethos that generates such grand and sinister antitheses. To a visiting New Yorker, Louisville seems a foreshadowing of what our city planners would achieve for Times Square: a Historical Theater District set in the amber of a monumental complex of office towers that has been sanitized of all plebeian sleaze. In Louisville, two or three blocks from the Humana building and the nearby A.T.L. is a square block and more of derelict porn theaters, pawnshops and topless/bottomless bars, bought up by the city for conversion to a parking lot but since left to rot, gutted and depopulated, a latter-day Auburn, Goldsmith's deserted village.

In such circumstances it seems altogether fitting that two of the plays at this season's festival should be concerned with homelessness, though Jimmy Breslin's *The Queen of the Leaky Roof Circuit* limits itself to the threat of eviction, and does not deal with its consequence. Amazingly, even with this standby of melodrama, Breslin generates something less than fifteen watts of theatrical electricity. Ostensibly, he is writing as an advocate for the victims of the system, but his stereotypical cast of black welfare mothers and raffish, absconding sperm donors struck me as the contemporary equivalent of *Amos 'n' Andy*, all written in a mechanistic version of black English (substitute "be" for "is") that had all the ethnic authenticity of Franco-American spaghetti. There is also a flint-hearted Jewish welfare worker who will give offense to Jews, and a racist Irish cop of surpassing stupidity.

All this, though offending good taste, might yet be mirthful or energetic, but the worst thing about the play is that the plot just treads water for most of its two acts. If Breslin were a carpenter, he couldn't construct a bookcase. Characters enter and stand idly about, and exit for no good reason. The lights dim for the delivery of long sermons. Finally, the dumb cop attempts (preposterously) to arrest the heroine's mute, retarded 10-year-old son for murder, and is foiled. Then, for a happy ending, the heroine saves her apartment by emulating the worldly wisdom of her Jewish social worker and bribing the housing court judge with a pair of shoplifted $900 boots. It would be sanctimonious to object to this plot device for being cynical: by comparison to the amorality plays of Joe Orton, *The Queen of the Leaky Roof Circuit* scarcely merits a *tsk*. Breslin fails at a more elemental level: He's written a lousy play.

And that bodes ill for A.T.L.'s new series of commissioned plays from celebrity writers, of which Breslin's was the first. Another commissioned literary headliner, Susan Sontag, withdrew before her work could be viewed. A third, Marsha Norman, produced the best play of the 1988 festival season, but it was done as a workshop production, which critics could enjoy but not review. Norman's success doesn't much diminish the shadow of ill omen cast by Breslin's play for she is a playwright of proven accomplishment, while five of the other six A.T.L. future commissions have been awarded (in sums that are not made public) to best-selling novelists: William Buckley, Harry Crews, E.L. Doctorow, Ken Kesey and Erica Jong (Arthur Kopit, with many fine plays to his credit, is the lone exception). My thoughts about such commissions tend in two directions: I think there should be an effort to get novelists of known dramatic capability, like those on this roster, to try their hand at theater; I also think that writers whom the goddess Fortuna has already smiled upon might risk their own development capital, i.e., the time it would take to write their maiden dramas. Bona fide playwrights have a hard enough time of it as the deck is currently stacked. Is there really more cachet to be gained from a bomb by Jimmy Breslin than from, changing the subject . . .

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Alone at the Beach, a perfectly crafted light romantic comedy by Richard Dresser? Or *Lloyd's Prayer* by Kevin Kling, a quirky, overlong but thoroughly lively *jeu d'esprit* and star vehicle for its author/actor? Both men have established track records as playwrights of promise, and their festival offerings were exemplary presentation pieces. *Alone at the Beach*, about the romantic entanglements of assorted yuppies sharing a summer house in the Hamptons, could be moved to Broadway with its set (by Paul Owen, as were the festival's six other remarkably varied sets) and cast intact, and everyone but the fustiest critics would love it. All that's absent from or awry in Breslin's comedy, Dresser supplies as amply as a smorgasbord: pacing, funny one-liners, plot reversals that are both inevitable and surprising, and a happy ending that comes like a good dessert after a pleasant dinner. The fusty critics will dismiss it as unserious and a sitcom, as did a few of the higher-minded attendees at the festival, but it's the kind of crowd-pleasing comedy the paucity of which has left Broadway theaters standing empty for at least a decade. Fritz Sperberg, Julie Boyd, Steve Rankin and Suzanna Hay handled the leading roles with zest and humanity, so as to let all but the hypothetical fusty critics know that yuppies are people, too, with erotic confusions worth our laughter. Gloria Muzio directed, and whatever part of the credit for the seamless satisfaction of the performance that isn't Dresser's must have been hers. Good show!

Kevin Kling's *Lloyd's Prayer* kicks off with the anomalous premise that its hero, Bob, acted by Kling, has been raised by raccoons. Caught and maimed in a steel trap, Bob is then brought up in a small cage by a traditionally dotty suburban couple (Julie Boyd, who did a comic Southern belle in *Alone at the Beach*, plays Mom and the other female roles in Kling's play with charm and brio). Leaving home, Bob falls into the clutches of Lloyd, an ex-con turned revivalist, and a tug of war for Bob's soul commences between the devilish con man and a ditzy angel for whom Bob develops the hots. Kling writes wonderfully gaga gospel riffs for Lloyd and plays the raccoon-boy so well it becomes hard to imagine anyone else undertaking the role. The problem with *Lloyd's Prayer* is that as the whimsies multiply, the plot falls to pieces. The art of creating wonderlands where anything can happen is a delicate one. Nevertheless, *Lloyd's Prayer* is precisely the kind of play that the Humana Festival was made to serve, since it allows a young and specifically theatrical talent to be seen at full stretch, with good actors and a top-drawer physical production. Given such a polishing, raw diamonds do shine brighter. Like a comic *Equus* or *Elephant Man*, Kling's play demands and thrives on the protocols of live theater, where we can be told that someone is a horse, or deformed, or (in this case) covered with hair over 95 percent of his body and, with the right magic, we pretend to believe what we're told.

Murphy Guyer's interminable one-acter, *The Metaphor*, is an equivocal failure (as *Lloyd's Prayer* is an equivocal success). It aspires to be a black comedy in the literarily wise-cracking style of Tom Stoppard with many a self-referential tip of the hat to Pirandello. Indeed, after a while, the play's self-referentiality entirely triumphs over its ostensible dramatic premise of a mute prisoner being tortured and interrogated by a chatterbox inquisitor, whose one-and-three-fourths-hour monologue is rather more maddening than I think

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the playwright intended. The final many minutes of the play would have us believe that the victim/actor Edward James Hyland, has triumphed over play, playwright and interrogator by refusing to follow the script, but that wasn't so: That unholy trio never stood a chance of losing, and Hyland and the entire audience sat where they were told and suffered in silence to the bitter end. But now I can say it: Dull!

Barbara Damashek's musical docudrama on the subject of homelessness, *Whereabouts Unknown*, was the most ambitious work put on at the festival. Damashek, a theatrical jack-of-all-trades, wrote the book, lyrics and music for *Whereabouts* (as she did for her Broadway success *Quilters*) and directed this production. There's no plot to speak of, simply a montage of monologues organized thematically, illustrating daily life in the streets and shelters of Louisville. These monologues have been adapted from interviews the author and her aides recorded with indigenous indigents, as well as from testimony in Anne Marie Rousseau's book *Shopping Bag Ladies*. As brought to life by a cast that seems suitably weatherworn and unglamorous, Damashek's portrait gallery commands a sympathy, respect and belief that Breslin's synthetic blacks never approach. Their jokes are funny, and their mots are bon. They have that essential inner freedom of autonomous literary creations that allows them to think about something besides the topic set for discussion. They live and breathe and even sing, each with his or her distinctive rasp, and Damashek's music, while not the sort to produce hit singles, has edge and vigor. The most memorable musical performances came from Jude Ciccolella, a gravelly bass, as Lockwood, a Vietnam vet of formidable physical presence, and by Bob Morrisey and Hubert Baron Kelly, who perform a beautiful drunken duet. Acting honors to Ray Fry, an A.T.L. regular famous for performing his patented double take in each of his roles (it's justly famous) and to Adale O'Brien and Evalyn Baron as, respectively, sane and crazy bag ladies.

As a moral spectacle and an assault on the heartstrings, *Whereabouts Unknown* packs a fair wallop, but as an assessment of the causes of homelessness it is as little illuminating as Jonathan Kozol's safely tautological dictum, "The cause of homelessness is a lack of housing." Indeed, in the block of still undemolished buildings just a brick's throw from the theater one could see a superfluity of housing going to waste, including an immense hotel, but all these possible dwellings had made the moral faux pas of situating themselves above the targets of civic improvers which had been bought up to be torn down. Neither Breslin nor Damashek seems willing to confront the fact that the homeless are often social and aesthetic undesirables, whose bad habits and preferred entertainments tend to diminish real estate values. Civic improvers want to believe that they can cleanse the urban environment of what is scruffy and down-market without consigning some proportion of the population to penury—or, if they don't exactly believe that, they certainly don't care to discuss it. And neither does anyone else.

Meanwhile, back in Manhattan, the capital of homelessness, En Garde Arts, which titles itself a "site-specific theater company," presented an evening of *3 Pieces for a Warehouse*, which amounted more nearly to 1½. One of the three pieces had to be abandoned when three of its actors left for (in the program's words) "more remunerative employment," and a second piece, Quincy Long's *Dirty Work*, resembled the kind of improvisational exercise where an actor must discover who he is and what motivates him, discoveries that in this case aren't made. The three actors and clarinetist involved should have sought more remunerative, or at least more rewarding, work themselves.

That left Maria Irene Fornes's one-acter, *Hunger*, a piece of black urban fantasy after the manner of Kafka. The play was performed, with no real site-specific necessity, in the raw space of an unheated warehouse building still in the process of conversion. The audience was conducted from one set of ass-freezing metal chairs to the next as at a *Tamara* of the lower depths. Fornes's story concerned the efforts of black-turbaned, middle-class Bea (Meghan Robinson) to track down a derelict named Charley (Joe Sharkey), who is sinking into imbecility along with his girlfriend Reba (Marilyn Dodds Frank) in the ultimately horrific shelter. The scene of brain-damaged repetitive small talk between Charlie and Reba has an uncanny, minimalist poetry to it, a little like Gertrude Stein's "Melanctha," and Reba's gradual metamorphosis from charity worker to fellow victim is capped with a final five minutes of lyric (and physiological) horror that dares to risk turning stomachs. As a statement on the subject of homelessness, *Hunger* won't win any prizes for investigative journalism, but as a scream in the night it is piercing.

Although television is ordinarily outside my allotted sphere of reviewing, I can't resist this opportunity to praise *God Bless the Child*, a two-hour made-for-TV movie that appeared on ABC on March 21. This film, written by Dennis M. Nemec and directed by Larry Elikann, made these various staged efforts to treat the theme of homelessness seem fainthearted at best, dishonest at worst. Nemec's script shows the ruinous effects of systemic poverty on a mother and her young daughter (Mare Winningham and Grace Johnston, who deserve Emmys for their performances) as they sink to ever more fearful and life-threatening depths of the welfare system, until the mother is faced with a final soul-crushing choice: to save her daughter's life she must seem to abandon her. The last scenes rival *East Lynne* for their capability of putting a lump in the throat, but a drama about homelessness that did not invite pathos would be an act of cowardice. Activists may fret to see real problems become the stuff of tear-jerkers, but until a certain weight of tears have been released on a national scale, the system will continue to be operated by the inactivists currently writing the rules. *God Bless the Child* shows that committed artists needn't be shrill or simplistic in order to be effective. Honesty *is* the best policy!

Julius Caesar is at once the dullest and the most familiar of Shakespeare's tragedies. It has become the most familiar precisely because it is the dullest, a tale so flensed of dramatic meat that it can be presented to any group of teenagers, however rowdy, without danger of awakening their interest. The two women in the play have but a scene each, in which they nag and are ignored. The grounds for Caesar's assassination are never debated, nor even discussed with any political acumen. The great man himself comes across more as a fatuously complacent office-holder than a world conqueror, a judgment Shakespeare himself seems to share when in *Hamlet* he shuffles the role into the persona of Polonius, who can claim, "I did enact Julius Caesar: I was killed i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me." The last two acts show us the less than riveting spectacle of two incompetent generals

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quarreling preliminary to their suicides. The issue of dictatorship versus democracy is never joined, and the central set piece, the long oration of a character with no other effective moment in the play, is so marmoreally perfect a piece of rhetoric that it cannot tip the balance of the nondebate, since the only lesson to be drawn from Marc Antony's oration is that whatever one's form of government one had better employ a good ad agency.

Given all these liabilities, the best one can hope for from any production of *Julius Caesar* is stateliness, pageantry and music, an *opera seria* without arias, and these aren't qualities likely to be in large supply at the Public Theater, which undertook *Julius Caesar* as the second production of its six-year assault on the whole *oeuvre*. It was stoically done. Without the ghost of an idea for making it new, director Stuart Vaughan had his cast trot through their lines as best they could, and the devil take the hindmost. The hindmost was indisputably Martin Sheen as Brutus. He declaimed every line in the same hoarse timbre and indicated every statement with alphabet-block simplicity: a thump of his hand to his heart when that organ was mentioned, or a finger pointing to his head, when "thoughts" had to be glossed. He was not left to die entirely by himself, however, but fell upon his sword with careful choreography, and nothing in his role became him like the leaving of it.

Al Pacino as Marc Antony seemed ill. This was an Antony whose protestations of a lack of eloquence can be taken at face value. Had he had to contend against any Brutus but Sheen's, the Romans' preference for him would have been unaccountable. But he did remember all the lines of that long oration, which, you'll recall, is very long indeed. Bravo, Al. Now, my advice to you is get some rest, eat sensibly, exercise and take Geritol every day.

John McMartin was a capital Caesar, the only one of the principals who could handle both blank verse and a toga with casual grace. As Cassius, Edward Herrmann was—peculiar. A tall man in any case, playing with the Linda Hunt-scaled Sheen and Pacino, he looked like Wilt Chamberlain among pygmies. His delivery was equally distinctive: Every line was spoken in quotes, as though this Cassius had read the play like all the rest of us and was performing it only under duress. This seemed a viable approach to a play on a subject representing inexorable historical forces, but since no one else was taking the same approach, Herrmann's distanced attitude registered as a kind of disavowal of the whole undertaking.

I have no brilliant idea of how, other than by recasting Sheen and Pacino, a better *Julius Caesar* might have been done, but I think in such cases it would be worth considering an archeological approach. The most famous *Julius Caesar* of modern times was the Orson Welles production in the 1930s, which infused the text with some contemporary polemical fire by equating Caesar and his Rome with Mussolini and Fascist Italy. Why can't theater directors, lacking any compelling idea of their own, *re-create* such classic performances the way a choreographer like Joffrey re-created the original *Rite of Spring*? □

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capable today of feats undreamt of in Giotto's day. Vasari, who credited himself with living in an age when the hand had caught up with the eye, nonetheless supposed that this could not have happened had God not taken pity on struggling artists by sending down, not a carton of Wheaties to show them the way, but Michelangelo himself, who brought the Renaissance ideal to perfection. Gombrich observed, with great wisdom, that only where there is a way is there a will: Giotto would have had no way of painting Fiesole bathed in sunlight, and so could not have formed the intention of painting such a picture. An immense amount of the technological history of pictorial capacity would have to unroll before artists could frame projects in which splashes of light or heavy shadows could be marshaled to whatever expressive ends.

On the other hand, a pictorial tradition must be ready to receive an artistic revelation from the future. The Milk-Bone beagle, were it to have fallen among the painters of the Sung, might have struck them as a curiosity, but not something that insinuated any degree of retrograde dexterity on their part. They might have seen that image as very like the mirror image of a beagle, but as they were not bent upon projects in which the mirror image was an ideal or a rival, they might have had as great a difficulty accepting it as art as Giotto's contemporaries would have had accepting Picasso or Kandinsky. Indeed, the capacity to hit off individual likenesses was so little esteemed in China as a skill fit for acquisition by artists, that those who in fact practiced it, to be sure long after the Sung, were no more regarded as artists than is the storefront photographer in, say, Patchogue, New York, who does wedding and confirmation photographs. In the absorbing exhibition of Chinese painting from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from the Robert Hatfield Ellsworth Collection, on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York until September 25, there is a portrait by Wang Yüan, dated 1871, of a scholar, Chao Chih-ch'ien, which really does show its subject in a particularly lifelike way. Indeed, Wang Yüan has appropriated, as we would say today, the exact manner of a street artist, to whom one would go if one wanted a portrait rather than a work of art. In traditional Chinese representation, I have learned from Caron Smith, the curator of this show, it was in the vitality of the brush that the vitality of the subject was felt to be captured, and not in some idea of identical resemblance between the subject and its image. "Let people say of this portrait, which truly resembles me, 'That is Chao!'" reads the inscription on this work, written by its subject. That optical resemblance should have come to be prized, as evidently it had by 1871, marks a deep artistic revolution in China. The appropriation of low art for the expressive purposes of high art at this moment in China is, in its way, as abrupt a transvaluation as that in which the emblemata of commercial art—the Campbell's Soup can label, for example, or the Brillo box logogram—were appropriated and made central in art by Pop artists in our culture in the 1960s. "I do not know if there are people who conclude . . . that the box is superior to a Giotto," Gombrich wrote, implying that the Renaissance ideal specified but a necessary condition of artistic excellence even in its own tradition. But that the like of the cereal box should, in the middle decades of the twentieth century, have become thematic in advanced art is indicative of changes in the moral and artistic climate of the times, of which Wang Yüan's portrait is a distant counterpart in Chinese art.

Sometimes history itself reveals the kinds of intersections which Gombrich's imagined example illustrates, in which a work or class of works from another tradition reveals to the artists of a given time where their future lies. Obviously, they must be ready for such revelation, as Picasso was when he came across the so-called primitive carvings in the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro in 1907. Such art was known, certainly, to artists of an earlier period in France. Already in the 1880s, Gauguin would have seen it as portending an alternative for painting to that defined by the Renaissance ideal. But for the most part, I believe, this art would have been perceived, before Picasso, perhaps as Giotto would have been perceived by the artists of Vasari's time—as good for his backward time but essentially as "primitive" (as the artists of Siena are still explicitly designated). When Japanese prints impinged upon European artistic consciousness in the late nineteenth century, a whole order of representation opened up for artists who learned from the fact that the Renaissance ideal had somehow become eroded. It was as if those prints showed a way in which Giotto, taken as a moment of historical choice, could have generated a historical path far different from the one that led through Masaccio to Raphael, Leonardo and Michelangelo, and to the academies beyond them. The flat planes, the tilted spaces, the absence of light and shadow, showed how this whole heavy tradition could be erased, and a new beginning made. It was out of this encounter with an alternative future that Van Gogh, Gauguin, Bonnard and Matisse began what became modern art, in which the eye as an optical system was disenfranchised in favor of something altogether more "cerebral," as Gauguin put it.

What is ironic is that almost simultaneous with the unseating of optical criteria in the West, those same criteria began to transform standards of pictorial representation in China. In the 1870s, for example, photographs began insistently to transform Chinese sensibility. The acceptance of the photograph as implying a possible system of artistic representation must connect with the same impulses that elevated the street portraitist to a position of artistic respectability. And both these transformations must in turn connect with the infusion into China of images from the West that might be the exact equivalents of Gombrich's cereal cartons. Ours has been a culture rich in pictures for a very long time, and after the Treaty of Nanking, in 1842, under which five ports were opened to commerce, immense numbers of labels must have found their way into China, bringing with them an awareness of pictorial possibilities that must have been as explosive in China as the Japanese print became in ours, remembering that those prints were as scorned by high art in Japan as the poster or the box label was in ours. It is my sense that this flood of imagery must have carried the weight of Western prestige, and perhaps was appropriated just because the West had begun to be perceived as culturally superior in Chinese eyes, much, I suppose, as the culture of exotic places like Tahiti was perceived as superior by European artists such as Gauguin. On a recent afternoon, I was examining with Wen Fong (the Met's

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Special Consultant for Asian Affairs), a pale landscape impressionistically evoked on a fan. Wen Fong could not repress the remark that it was painted during "terrible times" for China. They were times in which the rapacity of Western commerce imposed war, social upheaval, revolution and humiliation upon the vast, weak Chinese nation. And yet despite or perhaps because of this, the West must have appeared in certain ways an exemplary culture: the labels came from the same resources as the gunboat. The entirety of Chinese life and culture was to be transformed, radically, by the incursion into it of Western practices in a process that continues to this day. The Chinese artist was in the avant-garde of this cataclysmic movement, and though the paintings in the Ellsworth collection appear, often, to be pallid continuations of traditional forms and themes, not greatly more enterprising in the depictions of flowers, birds and animals, of watery landscapes and dreamful sages and beauties so slender their heads look like flowers on a stalk, than painting in the Ching dynasty ever had been, in fact these works seethe with alien forces and powerful influences that China could not assimilate without great and agonizing change. It is this that makes the exhibition exciting and instructive, quite apart from the aesthetic delights to be found in many of its objects. Who would not take pleasure from the cat painted in dotted lines by Hsü Ku, with its green eyes on top of its head, clawing at a butterfly which looks like an animated ideogram from the calligraphy nearby? But it is China as an inadvertent laboratory of historically induced artistic experiments in which the great value of this exhibition lies.

Surface similarities notwithstanding, these paintings are discontinuous with their own tradition simply because the infusion of Western representational vocabularies gave every Chinese artist a vision of an alternative way of working, so that for the first time, really, the Chinese painter painted in the light of a certain artistic self-consciousness. This meant that each image was now a matter of cultural choice. So even if an artist painted in a traditional manner, he had made his tradition his own by *deciding* to use it. Westerners may well have been regarded as "foreign devils" by patriots and administrators, because of their greed and cultural arrogance. But artistically they were liberators, offering a way to renew an artistic tradition that had grown as heavy and as old as ours when the Japanese print or the African mask offered Western artists a rejuvenating ideal. It does not greatly matter that the Chinese artist might have known Western styles only through fairly debased instances—imagine trying to construct a theory of Dutch painting on the basis of the illustration on the Dutch Masters cigar box. Still, such is the human mind that it is able to achieve such feats, as we construct theories of our first languages on the basis of often pretty debased inputs, from stuttering parents, say, who have heavy accents or speak in pidgin. It takes very little, after all, to open up a new vista.

Part, certainly, of the new level of consciousness consists in the appropriation by the Chinese themselves of certain archaisms in their own tradition. At the turn of the century, what came to be known as "oracle bones" (from the second millennium B.C.), were discovered, bearing incised calligraphic characters. These had immense historiographical and archeological significance—they opened windows, as it were, into the then nearly legendary Shang Dynasty. But the inscriptions were not allowed to stand as merely archeological specimens. Rather, they provided pictorial and calligraphic models for Chinese artists to use in the early twentieth century. They began, as it were, to redefine the brush stroke on the model of the incised mark, so that we find them painting characters and outlining forms as if in emulation of cut lines. This meant, in effect, a deliberate suppression of the accidentalities of the flowing brush—of what we respond to as the brushiness of the brush. Instead we see something almost mechanical—almost looking as if drawn by a radiograph. Wen Fong, in a seminar to which I was invited, sought to show how this archaic calligraphy was adopted to expressive ends by the great twentieth-century master, Ch'i Pai-shih. There is an adorable painting of two frogs by Ch'i Pai-shih that you will not be able to see until the second installment of the Ellsworth collection goes up on June 28. It shows one frog, executed in hard, dense, oracle-bone black, staring across at another frog, painted in the watery brush style of a calligraphic tradition that the black frog calls into question. It is as if some sort of style war were being fought in what

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might superficially seem like just another painting of frogs by a Chinese artist. In fact the frogs are only the occasion for a work that is really about painting.

You might want now to pay some special attention to three paintings of fruit by Ting Fu-chih. In addition to being marvelous paintings—perhaps the highlights of the show, aesthetically speaking—they embody and somehow synthesize all the tensions I discuss in this review. *Fruits*, painted in 1945, is a still life of fruits strewn abundantly across an implicit table surface. The fruits are painted as if solid, with shadows and highlights, neither of which would have been a component in Chinese painting before the introduction of photography. But they cast no shadows, and seem to exist in the kind of space traditional in Chinese art. They are like watery reminders of Dutch still lifes in this genre, say one by Willem Kalf (you might want to drop by the exhibition of Dutch and Flemish paintings from the Hermitage, and check Ting's way with fruit against Kalf's *The Dessert*—which incidentally shows fruit in a delft bowl patterned after a piece of Chinese porcelain). Yet Ting's painting is clearly a twentieth-century work, as can be seen by his pre-emption of an almost pointillist style of surface treatment (though with none of the spatial complexities of Seurat's work). Now pay attention to the calligraphy. It is self-consciously archaic and intriguingly self-referential: the inscription reads: "I have selected the characters from several Shang Dynasty oracle bones." So these paintings internalize and meld strategies from and make references to several artistic cultures, almost as if postmodern. Yet they are unmistakably Chinese. All these components are beautifully combined in a fan, painted with a delicious tangle of red lichees, from 1941, with an accompanying poem which again uses Shang calligraphic characters. The miracle of these works is that they assert themselves aesthetically, however much or little we may know of the historical circumstances or cultural collisions of which they are the products.

There is no catalogue as such for the show, and there will be few readers in a position to acquire the handsome but expensive ($850!) three-volume work which covers the paintings and calligraphy in the Ellsworth collection, written by Ellsworth himself. Part of the disincentive is that one of the three volumes is dedicated to calligraphy, which to me, as to most of my readers, is likely to be an inaccessible subject, though I once had the benefit of discussions with my late friend Chiang Yee, who wrote one of the best treatises on it in English. I assume that there must be as close a connection between content and form as Hegel found in classical sculpture, but if one cannot read the characters, the forms must remain empty and abstract. Thus I could not appreciate the writing in a scroll painting near the entrance to the exhibition by Pao Shih-ch'en, but I especially regretted it in this case because I found the inscription, translated on a nearby label, moving and in an odd way timely. The painting consists of the inscription, and then an image underneath of two men riding together on donkeys, caught up in conversation.

The inscription moved me to think about the art world as we live it today. Elizabeth Frank recently reproached me for being insufficiently responsive to the plight of "good artists working in bad aesthetic times." Our times indeed are bad aesthetically, and though I have strong doubts about the future of art, I cannot but pray that some artistic angel would throw into our midst the cereal box we need to find our way forward! Pao's inscription begins this way:

> Some chase fame at court. Some chase gain in the market. He who attains fame returns content. He who attains wealth returns secure. There are so many who never cease to strive. The universe is huge and never-ending.

Of the 90,000 or so artists said to be working in New York City today, few will attain contentment or security, nor will those who find security be assured of contentment. Pao Shih-ch'en did not achieve either of these himself, as he was a perpetual failer of the state examinations, the only gate to advancement in his culture. Perhaps the two riders have passed their journey philosophizing about fame, money, meaning, bad aesthetic times and the vastness of the universe—just as if they lived in Tribeca, where those topics are unendingly discussed. The consolations of philosophy are distant and thin. Still, the poem is a tiny, moving gift from an early modern Chinese artist to us. Not the cereal box we need, but something to help us through the night. This wonderful exhibition will enable us all to see ourselves a bit from the outside. Its art world is curiously similar to our own. □

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	C		I		F		G		N		I		S	
S	A	L	S	I	F	Y		A	D	E	N	O	I	D
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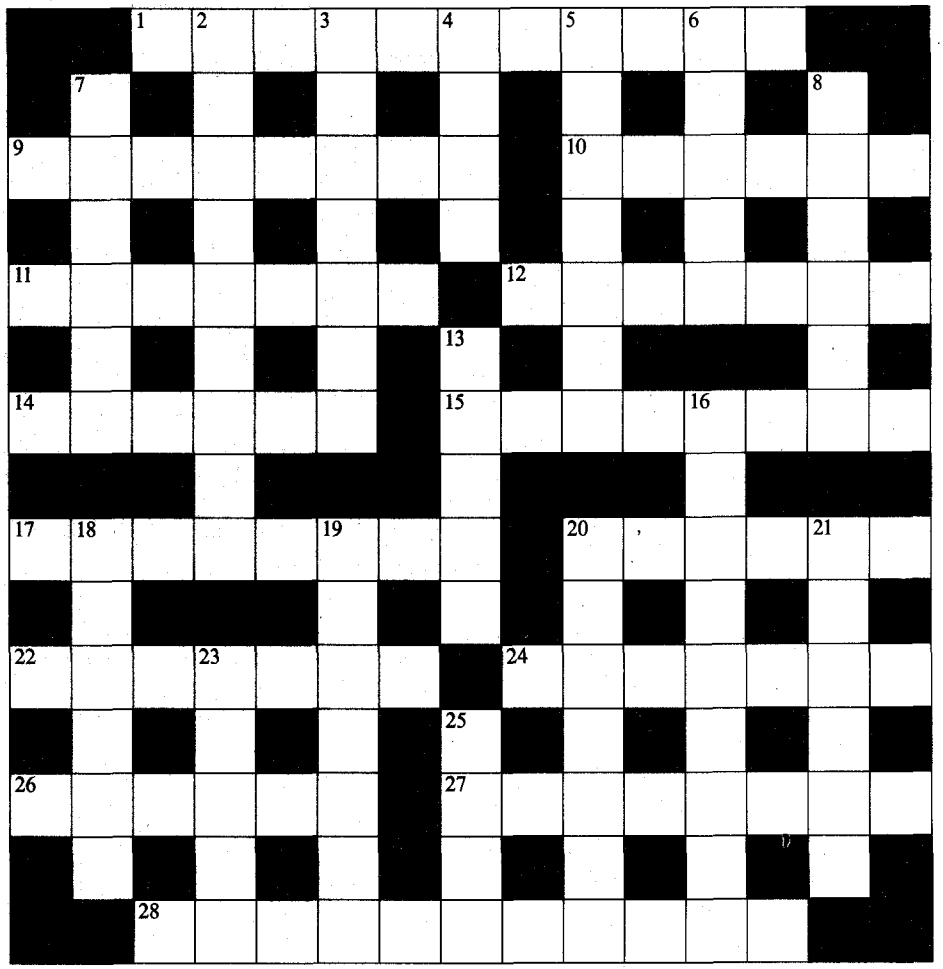
FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Such as 12, perhaps—or just a place in Michigan. (6,5)
9 Make over-enthusiastic statements to us in Paris, if you are this hungry! (8)
10 Strikes often due to the measure of the Englishman's pay. (6)
11 The marchers on the field take time to wrap something up, being hurt. (7)
12 What happened at Pamplona was an unhappy day for the Union. (4,3)
14 See 4 down
15 Crushed cane? Have excessive fondness with it, and it will make quite a story! (8)
17 What is given is more properly not payed for yet! (8)
20 See 6 down
22 The little doctor has lots of imitators, but one can find those who know how to make the cloth fit! (7)
24 You'll find it in the road, journeying to find a way to stop sitting. (7)
26 A useful tool, but you can pull a muscle this way!! (6)
27 A common man in England having assumed a horizontal position in a past condition might be called "Padre." (8)
28 In which needlework is practiced as a form of healing. (11)

DOWN

2 See 6 down
3 Had an idea, however, at one junction. (7)
4 and 14 across Certainly not Hard Scrabble Road! (4,6)
5 Do some talking, as they might say, reaching a not-quite-true conclusion—that's ecstasy! (7)
6,20 across and 2 Its acronym is a period typified by some specific feature, which many people have been hoping will pass. (5,6,9)
7 Something that might contain liquid is placed in another container, which has to be empty. (6)
8 Notice merely what might be a way to adapt things? (6)
13 Placed in such, and yet conveniently placed. (5)
16 You might find one around the neck of the 27, though it sounds like one might be yelling something like "Spot!" (3,6)
18 The subject of Shakespearean comedy. (6)
19 Row up to the vessel and see what the 27 might be holding. (7)
20 Work over the argument for a colored floater? (7)
21 Vegetable that grows up with something pointed on well-worked pathway. (6)
23 Consternation caused by what seems to belong to Peter's namesake. (5)
25 Examine the feet in a certain way? (4)

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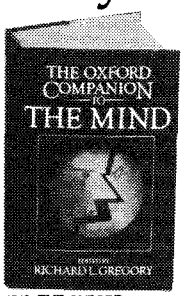

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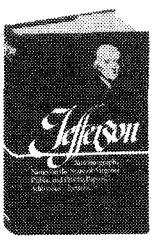

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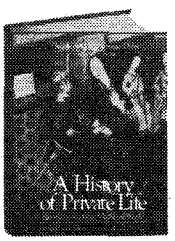

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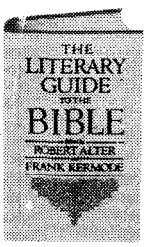

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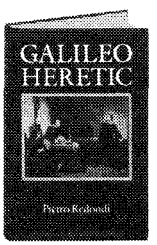

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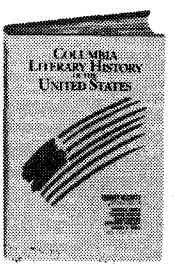

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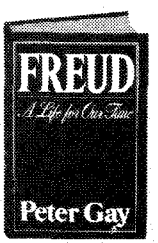

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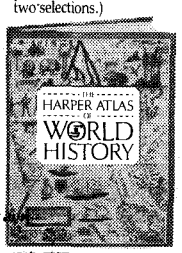

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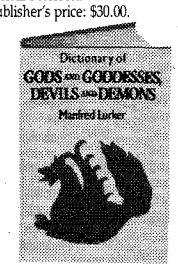

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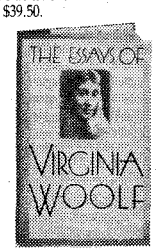

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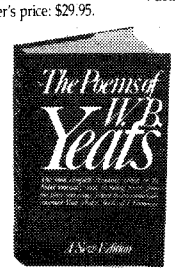

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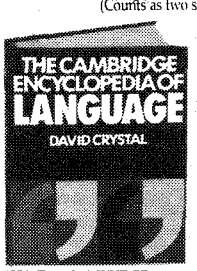

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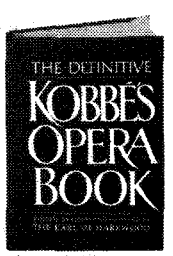

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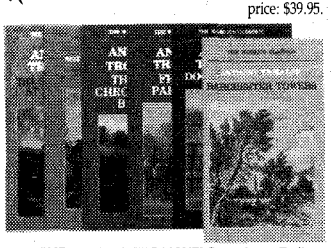

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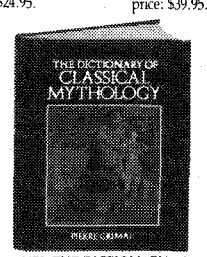

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